



Video Vandross. Epic's Luther Vandross congratulates "Night Tracks" co-producer Giles Ashford for increasing the show's use of black videos and, as a result, seeing an increase in its Nielsen ratings. Black videos now make up 25% of the "Night Tracks" playlist. Vandross' "Stop To Love" video is in heavy rotation on the videoclip program.

Georgio Groomed For Stardom

BY STEVE IVORY

LOS ANGELES "If everything goes like we plan it, soon it's gonna be superstar time," says Motown a&r vice-president Russ Regan. Those optimistic words were spoken about the debut album of Georgio Allentini, a Los Angeles based singer/songwriter just signed to Berry Gordy's label. In fact, those words seem ironic in light of the fact that Gordy nearly sold the company to distributor MCA at the end of 1986.

Allentini, who records under the name Georgio, is a 21-year-old DJ-turned-musician (he plays keyboards and guitar) who wrote, performed, and self-promoted "Sexappeal," a recent West Coast smash distributed by Macola, the same company that broke the Timex Social Club. Within the first four days

of its release the 12-inch sold some 9,000 copies and attracted Motown's interest.

"A friend of mine, manager Jerry Heller, was the first one to tell me about the record," says Regan. "Heller also brought me that 'Rumours' record while I was at PolyGram, but the company passed on it. I heard 'Sexappeal' for myself on my car radio one day and felt it was a record Motown had to go after, but I wanted to meet the artist first. I didn't want to buy just a record. We had dinner and I got excited. There was just something about him."

Regan refused to give a price tag on Georgio's multialbum deal, calling it "substantial" and noting that it gives the performer "quite a bit of creative control over his work." The deal also allows Motown to press and distribute its own 7-inch version of "Sexappeal." Macola retains domestic rights to the 12-inch, while Motown has foreign rights to both versions.

Georgio's debut album is being rushed to ensure a March release. "At Motown, he has an outlet to do just about anything," says Regan. "In fact, we encourage him to produce other acts."

Regan, six months into his Motown post after leaving PolyGram, dismisses the idea that Georgio is drastically different for the label or that his signing, in light of the recent Motown/MCA negotiations, is a statement to the industry of Motown's new vitality. "Chico DeBarge and General Kane have both produced recent street records," he says.

"In his heyday, Rick James, another street act, had plenty of creative control. But we're not changing over to any one thing. After all, Smokey Robinson, one of our mainstays, is about to have one of the biggest records he's had in a long time. If we're making any statement, it is that Motown is looking for fresh talent and will move quickly to make things happen."

Apparently what Motown saw in Georgio few others did. The performer, who says he spent time in the Prince camp waiting to be produced, says, "A lot of people in Los Angeles just gave me the run-around and didn't want to make a commitment." Frustration led him to press up "Sexappeal" on his own Picture Perfect label and offer it to Macola for distribution.

Release Is Both Commercial And Visionary New Prince Album Harks Back To '1999'

PRINCE HAS A LOT OF GUTS. He just has to. After two commercially disappointing albums, a flop flick, and murmurs around the industry that he is releasing too much product—and with Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston coming out with new albums—many advised Paisley Park's president to chill out.

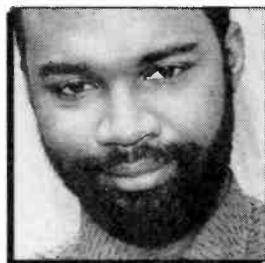
Instead, Prince is coming out with "Sign O' The Times," a double album that harks back to his "Controversy" and "1999" albums: It's an artistic statement that is quite commercial and yet visionary in its experiments. The difference between the good and great musician is that a good musician is satisfied with crafting a pleasing composition, while the great one constantly strives to redefine what "pleasing" means. "Sign O' The Times" is the work of a great musician.

The song "Play In The Sunshine" has a rockabilly flavor, what sounds like a xylophone bridge, and, toward the end, a section that sounds like an outtake from a '70s Return To Forever session. "Forever In My Life" has the feel of one of Sly's dance anthems, two vocals beautifully counterpointed, and then, out of nowhere, some acoustic guitar riffs that sound like they're from another song, yet really do fit. "If I Was Your Girlfriend" opens with an old-fashioned soul feel, with Prince copping Al Green licks, but with lyrics far from Memphis grit ("If I was your girlfriend, would U remember to tell me all the things U forgot when I was your man?"). The rap at the end might make Oran "Juice" Jones blush.

Prince's ear for arranging music is, perhaps, the most creative in popular music today. Moreover, most of his ideas lend themselves toward funk. There is one tune, "U Got The Look," that has that now-traditional Minneapolis dance groove. But it is a testament to Prince's ingenuity that he has, using a wide variety of studio tricks and musical sources, managed to stay danceable and yet move in another sonic direction. The single/title cut is quite representative of the quirky yet accessible style of Prince's latest effort.

SHORT STUFF: Smokey Robinson and Kashif will be featured on duets with Dionne Warwick on her upcoming Arista album... MCA's Ready For The World is in the middle of a six-month domestic tour... The Jacksons have a song on the MCA soundtrack of the soon-to-be-released Whoopi Goldberg flick,

"Burglar." The song, "Time Out For Burglars," features Marlon, Jermaine, Jackie, Tito, and Randy Jackson. Bernard Edwards produced... Atlantic is hoping to tap into the "Big Chill" generation with its soundtrack for "Platoon." The package contains '60s soul standards from the Miracles, Aretha Franklin, Percy Sledge, and Otis Redding... Here's a cute note for '60s Motown fanatics: On his next (and 40th) album, Smokey Robinson has a tune titled "It's Time To Stop Shoppin' Around." For those of you who don't remember,



the Miracles and Motown enjoyed their first million-seller with "Shop Around"... Black film producer Topper Carew is involved in an intriguing video/music parlay. Otis Day (aka actor DeWayne Jessie) & the Knights, so memorably featured in "Animal House," have been performing at rock clubs and

frat parties ever since. Carew aided Day and company in landing a deal with MCA Records for a recording to be supervised by that slick old doo-wopper George Clinton. The disk is due in May. Carew has also made a deal for a longform home video with Day & the Knights that he'll produce... The new Run-D.M.C. single is the rocky "It's Tricky," and Profile has provided a Shep Pettibone-mixed six-track EP to support it. However, it would be nice if black radio paid attention to the extra song on the EP, "Proud To Be Black." It is one of the strongest assertions of black pride to be recorded in many years. It deserves a spot somewhere on somebody's playlist, whether it is Black History Month or not... Arista has utilized an appealing little promotional gimmick to make the media aware of Patrice Rushen's label debut, "Watch Out." In addition to the standard advance cassette and press kit, the label has serviced a little VHS video interview with Rushen, co-producer Charles Mimms, her engineer, and even BET VJ Donnie Simpson. Bill Parker directed and Karolyn Ali produced... Gary LaMell, the man who took that great solo on Rick James' "Super Freak," has written a song for Motown's soundtrack to "Police Academy IV." Stacy Lattisaw will do the singing, and Jellybean Benetiz the producing... The sleeper cut on Chuck Stanley's Def Jam/CBS debut is "Make You Mine Tonight," a tender duet with Allyson Williams... Isley-Jasper-Isley's "Different Drummer" is one of the deepest al-

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**The
Rhythm
and the
Blues**

by Nelson George

Ben E. King, Percy Sledge On U.K. Chart After Ad Use

LONDON Ben E. King has hit No. 1 on the U.K. singles chart with his 1967 hit "Stand By Me," re-released here to link with a national television advertising campaign for Levi's jeans. And Percy Sledge's 1966 hit "When A Man Loves A Woman," featured in the second of the TV/cinema commercials for the 501 jeans line, has made it to No. 5. Both

recordings are on Atlantic.

Jurgen Otterstein, WEA's European marketing chief, says, "Every time motorcyclist Eddie Kidd, in a pair of Levi's, walks across the television screen, thousands more copies of 'Stand By Me' are sold."

He says the King/Sledge success "proves again the mutually (Continued on next page)

FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 7, 1987

Billboard HOT BLACK SINGLES ACTION

RADIO MOST ADDED

99 REPORTERS

			NEW ADDS	TOTAL ON
PRINCE	SIGN OF THE TIME	WARNER BROS	53	53
L. VANDROSS	THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN LOVE	EPIC	43	61
ANITA BAKE	SAME OLD LOVE	ELEKTRA	36	50
PATRICE RUSHEN	WATCH OUT	ARISTA	36	36
ATLANTIC STAR	ALWAYS	WARNER BROS.	26	46

Radio Most Added is a weekly national compilation of the five records most added to the playlists of the radio stations reporting to Billboard. Retail Breakouts is a weekly national indicator of those records with significant future sales potential based on initial market reaction at the retailers and one-stops reporting to Billboard. The full panel of reporters is published periodically as changes are made, or is available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Billboard Chart Dept., 1515 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036.

RETAIL BREAKOUTS

117 REPORTERS

			NUMBER REPORTING
HERB ALPERT	KEEP YOUR EYE ON ME	A&M	23
VESTA WILLIAMS	SOMETHING ABOUT YOU	A&M	14
READY FOR THE WORLD	MARY GOES ROUND	MCA	13
THE SYSTEM	DON'T DISTURB THIS GROOVE	ATLANTIC	13
GREGORY ABBOTT	I GOT THE FEELIN' (IT'S OVER)	COLUMBIA	13

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