

Freddie Perren

Freddie Perren's unique blend of pulsating rhythms, tight wocal harmonies and crisp composition dominated the music industry during the 1970s.

But few people know who he is. Freddie Perren has written and produced million-selling hit records for a "Who's Who" list of artists ranging from groups like Jackson Five, Tavares, The Sylvers, Peaches & Herb, and The Miracles, to individual performers such as Yvonne Elliman, Jerry Butler and Gloria Gaynor.

During the early part of 1979, Perren achieved the remarkable feat of having two of his songs in the Top-10 nationwide at the same time with Peaches & Herb blitzing the airwaves on "Shake Your Groove Thing' while Gloria Gaynor rocked the discotecques on "Only the Strong Survive."

Perren definitely survived the 70s, continuously producing hits that dominated both black and white radio markets. While at Motown, Perren launched the Jackson Five with "I Want You Back" and continued the fruitful relationship through three platinum albums, three gold albums and lengthy string of hit

Perren also scored heavily while at Motown with the Miracles' classic "Love Machine."

Branching out as an independent producer, Perren augmented his success by creating "Boogie Fever" for the Sylvers, "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel" for Tavares, and Yvonne Elliman's "If I Can't Have You."

When asked how he felt about behind the invisible man behind the stars, Perren responded, " view composing and producing songs to be as great a skill as performing a tune. I don't really

Hit Maker In 1980, Freddie Perren received eight Grammy nominations. In the last 10 years, he has had over 25 singles which sold over a million copies. Eleven

of his productions have been No. 1 on the charts.

and voice. To do that, I must respect the talents of people like Gloria Gaynor who has one of the most fantastic voices l've ever heard."

Continuing to discuss the creative processes involved in producing a hit record, Perren states, "Working with Peaches & Herb or Gloria Gaynor involves bringing together highly skilled singers and musicians to achieve the goal of coming up with a record that makes people get up and dance or at least pat their

"I work on the theory that if people will dance to the record, they'll buy it. That means I have to be aware of trends, especially dance trends so that I know how to shape the sound to today's

"Sometimes it gets scientific in that I spend a lot of time analyzing things related to my craft. While most people listen to music for pleasure or go to a disco to have fun, I do it to try to understand why people respond to a certain number of beats per minute or certain combinations of sounds. I go to discos to see how records actually sound in that physical environment as compared to

## By Frederick Douglass

have no frustrations about wanting to be out on the stage in front of an

"Not to say that won't ever happen . . . I've got this group called Freddie and the Team Players that work with me in the studio . \ . you never know what we might do next. Anyway, I'm into producing now and that's what my life is all about.

"I like being the man behind the controls because that puts me in command of every facet of the creative process. I don't mean that I try to dominate what the artist wants to do with a song vocally or instrumentally.

"My goal is to custom tailor a song to the artist's unique skills

hearing them on a car radio or home stereo."

"To the trained ear, there are subtle and not so subtle differences in the way sounds blend and interact when played back in different kinds of surroundings. So I have different mixes of some of my records for the radio and the disco with yet another mix on the album or single sold in the store. giving the listener choices as to what he prefers.

"For example, the mix designed for the radio might be around three minutes long so the record can gain airplay. The disco mix of the same record might betwice as long, with a drum break or an instrumental interlude

somewhere towards the middle of

"Another thing is that discos tend to have fantastic equipment that exceed the frequency range of car radios, so you can really stretch out. You can even do a physical thing by panning a sound from speaker to speaker, making the dancer feel like the music is moving through his body.

"You can simulate the heart beat and make the dancer feel like he's wrapped up in a womb as the rhythm and lights of the disco blend with the thumping bass and pounding drums to create a total musical environment."

Describing the role of the vocalist in producing a hit record, Perren says "while sound and instrumentation is important, the major thing is the artist and the

"Everything background, but very keyed because if the music doesn't work or suit the artist, the record doesn't come off and you've wasted everybody's time. That's why I spend a lot of time perfecting the words and the music. before I go into the studio with an

"I've got this one cat I work with named Dino Fekaris . . . man, he and I spend hours poring over every note, every word of a tune until it's absolutely perfect as a song and ideally suited to the particular artist who's going to

"That's what happened with 'Only the Strong Survive' which was tailored to Gloria Gaynor and Gloria Gaynor alone . . . I've yet to hear anyone else sing this song like it was meant to be sung like Gloria does."

Describing some of the artists he has worked with, Freddie Perren continues his hyperactive movement and says "Gloria Gaylor is one of the most sensitive artists I've ever worked with . . . She could take nothing music and make it sound like a classic.

"I've been friends with Herb for many years and Linda Green, (Continued on Page 5)

## The Threat to Black Colleges

By Tony Brown

At the beginning of President Jimmy Carter's last year in office, the money allocated to all black colleges had dwindled from 5.2 percent of the total federal education budget under President Ford to 4.1 percent.

In addition to dwindling financial resources, HEW and subsequently the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education, were implementing a racist version of so-called desegregation which turned black colleges into white colleges and let white colleges remain white.

Suddenly, West Virginia State, Bluefield State, Lincoln University in Missouri were "desegregated" predominantly white. Savannah State College in Georgia was emasculated in a so-called "swap" with nearby Armstrong State, a white college, resulting in the loss of one of the best schools of education in the country and 50 percent of its annual graduates.

Morgan State University was threatened with a "sub-merger" into a new University of Baltimore and the Justice Department sued to force Southern University, the largest black school of higher education in the world, and Grambling in Louisiana into branches of the white state

## -Hit maker

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the current 'Peaches,' is the perfect complement to his voice and stage act ... I met Herb during the days I was working in Jerry Butler's back up group and as his arranger . . .

"It was a pleasure to produce a hit like "Shake Your Groove Thing" for Herb who really has become a good friend over the years . . . Jerry Butler is one of the most talented artists I've ever worked with, the total artist . . .

"Working with the Jackson Five was really a ball, especially when they were very young because they performed for the fun of it and were eager to learn everything . . . I predict that they will be top entertainers for years, both as a group and with individuals doing their own thing . . . I think the Sylvers also have a lot of potential for growth in the

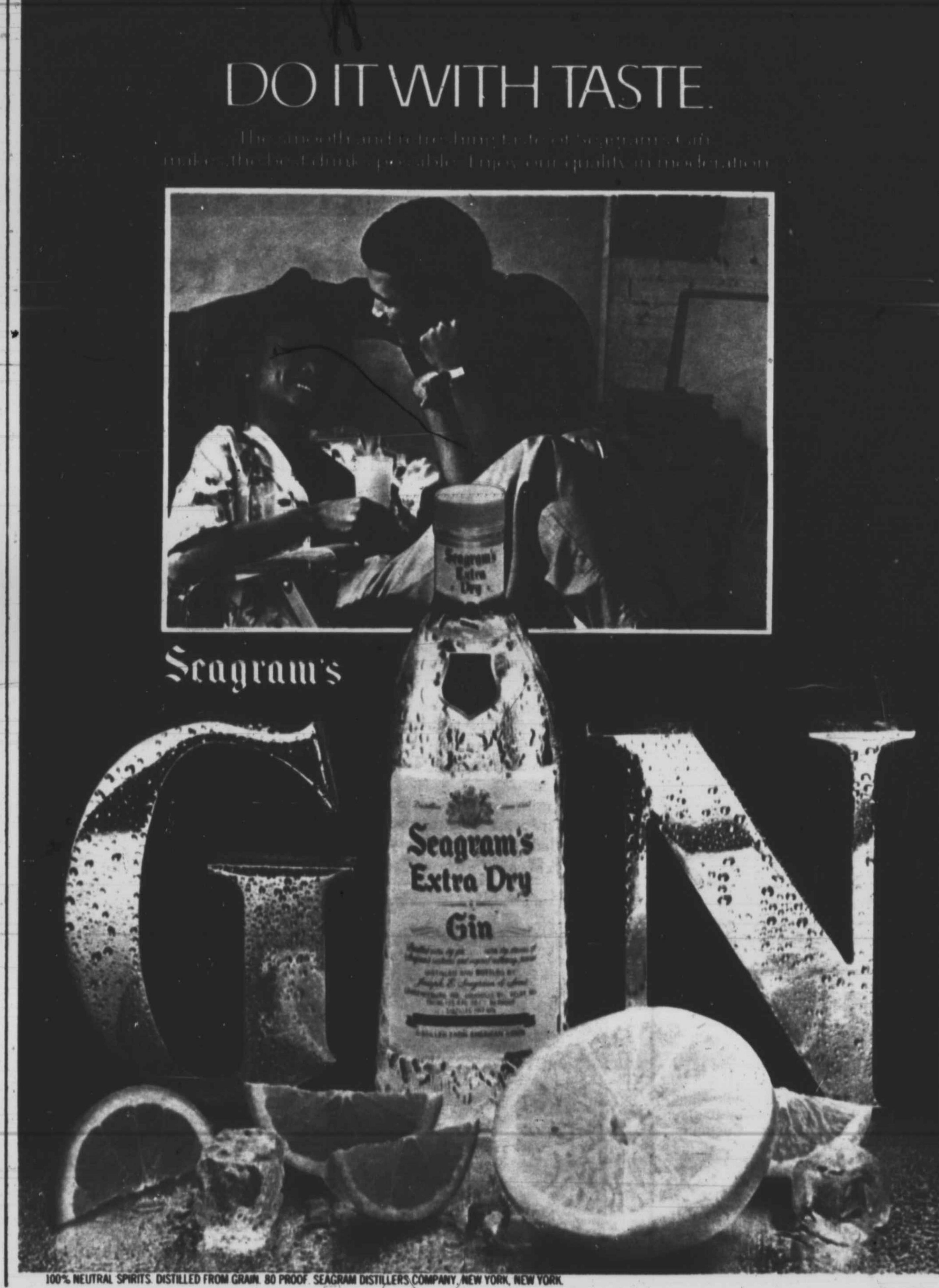
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system. Justice attacks Texas this

Today, 90 black colleges graduate as many blacks as 1,500.

white colleges. Overall, only 30 percent of all black college students attend a predominantly black college, but more than 50

percent of the black college graduates come from them. About seven out of 10 blacks at white colleges never graduate.



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