GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING S.A. GROUP HITS THE ROAD

swing through the United States the Graceland album and tour winning new fans and adding to with Paul Simon. the convictions of the old fans.

By Eve Ferguson-Mokabe name, Ladysmith Black Mam- 47-year old leader and founder of The Black Axe from the bazo, recently treated the group, "In South Africa, we township of Ladysmith came Washingtonians to their a cap- wanted to spread our music, but chopping its way through pella singing that won them we had no money. Then came American audiences on its recent noteriety when they appeared on Paul Simon."

"The best over the top Terrorfest of 1988."

-Phantom of the Movies, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

squirm sequel that outfrights the first."

-Bill Harris, SHOWTIME, NATIONAL RADIO

"This year's best and scariest special effects."

—Dale Stevens, CINCINNATI POST

"Move over Freddy, Pinhead is the new

horror hero." - FANGORIA MAGAZINE

HEDRA SHADING MALINE IN CANTON OF DOLLEY STERED & NEW WORLD PICTURES OF MALICIAL THEATHER.

STARTS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23RD BOULEVARD

MARLEY STATION LOEWS W/ They Live GCC DC SECURITY 8

Page 4

A boogey man bonanza — the scream and

So impressed with the group's singing, Simon immediately sent for Black Mambazo to record two The ten-member group, better Simon was sent to us by God," cuts on the Graceland album in CLIVE BARKER TAKES US ON A DESCENT INTO HELL the Soles of Her Shoes."

pressed by Simon that he began to call him "Vulindela," or 'He who opens the gate.' Shabalala also wrote a song about the

. . I will never forget that day/ It was in Johannesburg/ In nineteen eighty-five/ When I met Paul Simon/ It did not take long time/ Then I saw myself having wings to fly. . . .

tional audience, Black Mambazo is no newcomer to the scene. Zulu" album in 1986.

in the rural Emnambithi as the axe, with which they chopped Durban Choir, a reference to the down the competition.



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

church affiliation of the music. After several other name traditional South African music. Despite the gratitude that changes, Shabalala and his a blend of Christian choral music Shabalala has for Simon in help- cousins and brothers arrived at and Zulu chants called ing the group reach an interna- the name Ladysmith Black Ilsicathamiya. The style, using all-

Ladysmith, for the rural town having released over 25 albums they came from; Black for the hostels in South Africa, where in South Africa, including the Black oxen on the farm that men working in the diamond and Grammy award winning "Shaka Shabalala lived on ("I noticed that gold minds have to live for exthe Black oxen were the tended periods of time without The group was founded in 1960 strongest.") and Mambazo, the their families.

The style of music they sing is male voices without accompaniment, grew out of the men's

It is a sad music, telling of love (Continued on Page 5

LEVERT: R&B WITH A 'bloodline'

By Darryl Elwood Owens AFRO Staff Writer

A few short years ago, the rhythm and blues scene seemed O'Jays lead singer Eddie Levert. to be closing the door on the Sr. genre's most constant staple: the soul group.

The charts were filled with glitz of the music world at an ear-Whitney Houstons, Anita Bakers, Luther Vandrosses and Lionel Ritchies, but very few Temptations. Four Tops or Spinners.

But, then came a trio with an impressive "Bloodline" who gave 1 r&b a much needed injection of group soul. The group, Levert, known for their soulful harmonies and lyrics of life, hit the charts in 1986 with "Bloodline" reminding fans just how spellbinding a soul group can be.

strayed away from singing groups...now everybody (Tony Toni Tone, Guy, The Boys) is getting back into it.

"We do what we feel is good and then we let the public decide what they like. With us being part of the public for so long before we got our break we listened to a lot of music and

picked out what we liked." Gerald Levert, 22, along with his brother Sean, 20, and Marc Gordon, 24, head this vanguard of new r&b groups, which should

come as no surprise when one ly age while touring with the looks at their family tree — Sean O'Jays, all but predestining them and Gerald are the sons of for music greatness.

But Gerald and Sean weren't exactly pushed into becoming Growing up in Ohio, the trio was exposed to the glamour and "It's (performing) what



LEVERT

THE AFRO-AMERICAN

Friday Plus, December 23, 1988

SOUNDS

By Carl Matthews MIDNIGHT STAR "Midnight Star" (Solar)

with the follow-up to its 1986 lineup is: Belinda Lipscomb, Bo "Headlines" LP.



ETTA JAMES

Together," and "Victory," the much about that. group struck gold with their 1984 ETTA JAMES album "No Parking On The Dance "Seven Year Itch" (Island) Floor," which featured the hit

singles "Freak-A-Zoid" and "Wet My Whistle." They also hit the charts with "Operator" from their funk "Planetary Invasion" album.

The current Midnight Star Watson, Melvin Gentry, Jeff Cooper, Kenneth Gant, Bobby Lovelace and Bill Simmons.

Midnight Star's latest album begins with the hit single "Don't Rock The Boat," featuring a strong rap performance by Ecstasy of Whodini. Ecstasy's presence may explain why this cut sounds like Kool Moe Dee's "Wild Wild West."

"90 Days (Same As Cash)" and "Snake In The Grass" are a couple of fun tunes for longtime fans of the group, although they're same sort of dance fluff that's available on "No Parking." But with mass-appeal ballads like "I Don't Want To Be Lonely" and the hip-hop elements in "Boat" Midnight Star was formed in the group shows its willingness 1976 at Kentucky State Universito to try new things instead of ty. After releasing such albums recording the same album over as "The Beginning," "Standing and over. Can't complain too

The "reigning soul queen on

-S.A. GROUD

(Continued from Page 4)

and love left behind, of lonely response," he continued, "Now in women waiting for their men to South Africa there are whites come home and new women in who listen to our music where the city. It is not a music of pro- they have never heard it before." test, but rather a music that Shabalala is proud of his comes as a result of the apartheid system.

But it also brings some joy. It tions masked to now draw attention from white bosses. So it is called Ngomabusuki, night music thomusicologist Dr. Elkin Sithole. or Cothoza Mfana, to "walk lightly on one's toes."

Whooo, Whooo, the sound of the bus at the beginning. It is the bus that takes her something to my people."

Ladysmith Black Mambazo brilliant career has not been Boycott against South Africa wife and children.

"I did not know the meaning of Shabalala, who is also an ordainboycott was broken are not tell- happy to stay on the farm."

"Graceland gave us worldwide

music, and has taken steps to insure that isicathamiya, born out of singing competitions, does not is a reminder of ethnic Zulu tradi- die, founding the African Traditional Music Association (ATMA) with South African en-

> "There are many a capella groups singing in South Africa, but there is no demand for them. There are maybe 100 or so outstanding musicians that need ex-

Some of those groups performed in New York's Apollo Theater with Mambazo in October, and travelled on without the group to Washington and other cities in a tour called "The Indestructible Beat of Soweto."

Ladysmith Black Mambazo is without pitfalls. Shortly after the touring American and Europe Graceland album was released, now to promote their new album l' questions about the violation of "Journey of Dreams," but the United Nations Cultural Shabalala misses his home, his

"I'm glad to make people a" over the world see that South the word 'cultural boycott' " said Africa has something unique," Shabalala said, "But even the big | ed minister. "(But I found out cities like New York make us I that) These people who say the miss the country. We are most



MIDNIGHT STAR

is back with her first album on Am," "At Last," "Trust In Me," few months ago, and it even Island Records.

Born Jamesetta Hawkins 50 more than 30 albums to her follow-up single, "Way Out," years ago, Etta had her first hit credit, including "At Last," "Etta record in 1954, "Roll With Me James Sings Funk," "Come A Lit- probably will, too. It's mellow rap Henry," produced by '50s R&B tle Closer," and "Changes." bandleader Johnny Otis. "Roll On her latest album, perfor-With Me Henry" was banned on mances such as the positively radio due to "suggestive" lyrics uplifting "I Got The Will," the and was later titled "Dance With bluesy "Jump Into My Fire," and Me Henry."

Etta went on to hit the charts tions' hit "Shakey Ground" prove the like.

true soul survivor. Keyboardist Barry Beckett, who played on her critically-acclaimed 1967 LP "Tell Mama," produced most of the tracks here. J.J. FAD

once again that Etta James is a

"Is It Love" (Ruthless)

The current single from Juana Burns, Michelle Franklin and Dania Birks is the third single from their debut album "Supersonic - The Album." It's their follow-up to their "Way Out"

Their debut single, "Supersonic," was a hot rap record a and "All The Way Down." She has made the pop charts, but their stiffed, and this current single that's listenable enough, but, like much of their current album, will quickly be forgotten, especially when more dynamic and inspired performances are available by the smooth cover of the Tempta- groups such as Salt-N-Pepa and

IT'S TOUGH TO BE A BLACK HERO.



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