

THE PLATTERS

History

The Platters began as an all male quartet in 1953. Members Tony Williams, David Lynch, Herb Reed and Alex Hodge called themselves “platters”, the name used in those days for records. In 1954, Tony brought the group to Buck Ram for management. Buck Ram added a girl, fifteen year old Zola Mae Taylor, who was formerly with the Queens. In August, 1954, Alex Hodge left the group and was replaced by Paul Robi.

Buck Ram led The Platters to their first recording contract with Mercury Records and in 1955 “Only You” became The Platters first gold hit record. Under Buck Ram’s careful direction, management and coaching, The Platters garnered 16 gold records and attained international fame and immortality through their romantic ballads. Classics like “Only You”, “My Prayer”, “Great Pretender”, “Smoke Gets In Your Eyes”, and others continue to be played all over the world today.

Even from its early beginnings, The Platters experienced several changes in its members. Today, there are several groups calling themselves “The Platters” despite several lengthy court battles. Wilson Williams, Platters vocalist and manager, states that there are about 130 Platters groups all over the world but there are only five groups who have a legitimate right to use the name through court orders or trademark ownership. Williams’ group is one of them.

Of the original members, the following are deceased: Tony Williams, David Lynch, Paul Robi and recently, Zola Taylor. Buck Ram the first manager is also deceased. Currently, members of Wilson Williams and The Platters are Wilson Williams, Lonza Bartlett, Sase and Melvin Whitaker. The Platters’ legacy is carried on the voices of these individuals as they continue to perform all over the world, bringing back memories of romance and simpler times with their beautiful ballads and delicately balanced harmonies.

The Individual Platters

Lonza Bartlett

Lonza recently landed the enviable position of lead singer for The Platters, replacing Monroe Powell who has been the group’s lead singer for the past 36 years. Lonza got his start singing gospel. His colorful music career spans over 20 years singing with gospel groups and a stint with Universal Studios Entertainment. His vocal range and tone impressed The Platters management immensely due to the uncanny resemblance to Tony Williams’. Lonza is from Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Wilson Williams

Baritone Wilson Williams also got his start in music singing gospel. He cut his first record in the early 70's and played Rev. Jesse Jackson in Tommy Butler's civil rights-inspired play "Selma". In 1978, he signed with ABC records and recorded the album, "Up The Downstairs", the last album produced using Motown musicians and arrangers. A copy of some of Wilson's earliest records currently fetches up to \$2500 in the serious R & B collectors' market. As Platters manager and director, he has honed the Platter's concert shows into an entertainment treat for all ages by including up tempo numbers that get the audience dancing in the aisles but at the same time preserving the beautiful ballads and rich harmonies for which The Platters is famous. His bluesy rendition of "Unchained Melody" remains one of the most requested numbers in the Platters' concert shows. He has been with The Platters for 13 years and has toured with the group all over the US, Canada, and Asia.

Sase

Sase is fondly known as the Platters "dish". Drawing inspiration from experiences in church, talent shows, and progressively larger stages, Sase has continually developed her songwriting and vocal skills. With each performance and recording, she has evolved her talent into a unique sound, presence and mystique, attracting attention from audiences and peers alike. Her persistence and passion for music paid off when she auditioned for an international agency and was hired as one of the "Supremes". She toured with the Supremes all over Europe and Asia until she joined The Platters in 2001. She hails from Atlanta, Georgia by way of Greensboro, NC.

Melvin Whitaker

The oldest member of the group hails from Chesapeake, Va. He's been singing most of his life, mostly with gospel groups before joining The Platters.

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