



Shirley Johnson: A Chicago Blues Queen

Singer, Nightclub Entertainer, Shirley Johnson is a veteran Chicago Blues Singer. Her music is soulful and smooth; her lyrics are warm, affectionate, and understanding. Shirley presents a sound that is distinctively her own, conveying stories of reality, with the ultimate message that personifies love.

Born in Franklin, Virginia, Shirley's musical talent was evident from the age of 10, when she began singing gospel music. After 8 years of singing Gospel, In 1965 she began singing Pop and R&B music. From there Shirley was recognized as one of the up and coming female artists in R&B music. Because of popular demand Shirley became an opening act for such superstars as: Al Green, Jerry Butler, Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick, Millie Jackson and many others. Also, during the late 60's she recorded her first three singles on Biggs and Shawn Records.

In 1984, she was advised by a close friend to move to Chicago, the home of the Blues. With her warm personality, Shirley was welcomed into the Blues arena with open arms. She opened for some of the best in the industry. Some of

those artists were: Johnny Christian, Artie "Blues Boy" White, BuckWheat Zydeco, Little Milton Campbell, Johnnie Taylor, Buster Benton, Koko Taylor, and Bobby Rush.

Between 1986 and 1988, Shirley recorded 2 more singles on Diamond Jim & Big Boy Records. In 1989, Shirley became acquainted with Professor Eddie Lusk, and later toured with him as his opening act. Shirley later formed her own band in 1991, which jump-started her Blues career. She was asked to appear in 3 movies: "Next of Kin" with Patrick Swayze, "Father Jim" with Robert DeNiro, and "V.I. Warshawski" with Kathleen Turner. She also did a commercial for the Dept. of Tourism for the state of Illinois.

Hard work and dedication finally paid off, because in 1994 Shirley released her debut CD called "Looking for Love". The 1st single to ride the charts was "I'm Gonna Find Me A Lover". Shirley also did three compilation CDs. She currently is a Delmark Recording Artist with two CDs distributed by Delmark: Killer Diller and Blues Attack. The Delmark Releases caused Shirley to be nominated for two Blues Blast Music Awards. Shirley is in constant demand all over the world, having toured 21 countries. You can find her at Blue Chicago, one of Chicago's premier Blues Clubs which she has called home for 18 years.