



MUSIC BIO

Yashah Ben Y'shua was born George Michael Wilson Jr. on March 4, 1954, to Mr. & Mrs. George Wilson of Los Angeles, California. At age eleven months, he was adopted by Mr. & Mrs. Aaron F. Marshall of Los Angeles, and renamed Dana Aaron Marshall.

As a toddler, young Dana showed a highly unusual talent in speaking and in music. When he quoted from the book of Psalms at age two, his astonished parents predicted he would grow up to be a lawyer or a preacher. By the early '60's, Marshall's musical talent inspired his mother to purchase a piano and hire a piano teacher for her young son. His first public musical performance was a piano recital at the Wilshire Ebell Theater in Los Angeles.

In the fall of 1969, while participating in his junior high school's drama program, the fifteen-year-old Marshall was "discovered" by legendary actor-comedian *Bill Cosby*, and earned a role in the animated TV special, *Hey, Hey, Hey, It's Fat Albert!* The program was originally broadcast by NBC on November 12, 1969. The landmark film itself was the first all "black" feature length animated feature in history.

Earlier that same year, Marshall's songwriting and singing with a local group in nightclubs and high schools around the city led to an introduction to several members of the legendary Sylvers family, including fourteen-year-old James and fifteen-year-old Charmaine, who were his fellow students at Locke High School.

Soon afterwards, Marshall was introduced to the family's eldest brother Leon, who was sixteen at the time, and a percussionist with the local WLCAC band that backed Marshall's singing group, "The Statues of Soul." These events would later prove to be the main crossroad of his entire musical life - setting the young teenager on a course toward his ultimate destiny and purpose...

Marshall soon discovered that like himself, both Leon and James Sylvers were aspiring young songwriters. He also learned they were in the process of putting together a new singing group, consisting of the two of them, along with their two oldest sisters Olympia and Charmaine, and younger brothers Edmund (R.I.P.) and Ricky.

The newly reformed family singing group, '*The Sylvers*,' signed with MGM Records in 1971, with their first album entitled, *The Sylvers*, being released on the Pride subsidiary label the following year.

Later that year, the youngest Sylvers sibling, Foster, recorded a solo album, entitled *Foster Sylvers*, which included the R&B classic, *Misdemeanor*. The album also included one of Marshall's songs, entitled *Only My Love Is True*, his first published work. In the summer of 1974, his second published work, the unknowingly prophetic *Love Over Mind* appeared on the *Sylvers III* album.

In the summer of 1973, while serving as a judge at the *KGFJ Soul Search*, an annual talent contest held in South Central Los Angeles, the nineteen-year-old Marshall discovered an amazing five-man singing group from Crenshaw High School called “The Five Enlightens.”

Its leader was future *Shalamar* and *Miracles* lead singer *Sidney Justin*, who founded the original group, which included Justin’s cousin, second tenor *Gonzales Ozen*, who ultimately replaced the late *Bobby DeBarge* in the now legendary Motown act, *Switch*.

Ironically, the new group’s bass singer was the former bass singer of “The Statues Of Soul,” the five-man Locke High based group Marshall had performed with during his High School years. Marshall soon joined the new group himself, replacing a departing member, and immediately began to “groom” the new act for music industry success.

After writing several new songs, and leading the group through a series of intensive around-the-clock rehearsals, Marshall re-christened the act *Aphrodisia*, and took the group into the recording studio. Using the well-rehearsed musicians from his *Aphrodisia* Band, Marshall produced a self-financed sixteen-track demo - a professional production at the time - and began to shop his tracks to the major record labels based in Hollywood.

Marshall also hired a professional photographer to capture the recording sessions, and invited James and Leon Sylvers to sit in as special guests, since they were already successful recording artists and songwriters (although not yet producers, as the entrepreneurial young performer was seeking to become.)

Marshall’s initial efforts at finding a label for his new group were unsuccessful. Despite his persistence, he experienced one “pass” after another. Undeterred, Marshall came up with a very unique and ultimately successful solution. He decided that if he could draw public interest in the group on a national scale, perhaps he could create interest among Hollywood record executives as well.

After a bit of preparation and planning, Marshall showed up unannounced at the Sunset Blvd. offices of “*Right On!*” - a very popular “black” teen magazine, that regularly featured teen groups the Sylvers and *the Jackson Five*. When he arrived in the outer office, he asked if the editor was available. To his surprise, he was escorted into her office without so much as even giving the receptionist his name.

Flo Jenkins, an affable young black woman with an engaging smile, welcomed him and asked why he had come to visit her. Marshall introduced himself, and told Jenkins he was a songwriter and had worked with the Sylvers. She seemed impressed, so he quickly asked her to play a tape of the new singing group he had “discovered.”

While Jenkins was listening, Marshall handed her several photos of the group in action in the studio. Almost immediately, she smiled broadly and offered to do a story and photo shoot on the group for publication in the September ’73 issue of *Right On*. She then told Marshall, “Go down the street to the RCA Building, and you’ll find the offices of Fuqua III Productions. And tell them that Flo Jenkins sent you.”

Needless to say, the young producer was flush with excitement at the possibility of bringing the good news to his fledgling group. As he left the Right On offices, Marshall suddenly realized he was about to meet the legendary Motown producer *Harvey Fuqua*. Being an avid Motown fan, Marshall was well aware of Fuqua's status as a highly accomplished record producer, as well as being the brother-in-law of *Berry Gordy Jr.* himself.

Marshall was also aware of the fact that a year earlier, Motown had relocated from its namesake Detroit, Michigan, to Los Angeles, to pursue the budding movie careers of Berry Gordy Jr. and the legendary *Diana Ross*, whose portrayal of the late great Billie Holiday in the landmark film "*Lady Sings The Blues*" was an early industry breakthrough for black filmmakers.

Marshall hoped that his earlier appearances at the Motown offices across the street wouldn't discourage Fuqua from hearing him out. Fortunately, that was not the case. As soon as Fuqua heard the first song on the demo and learned of Marshall's deal with Right On magazine, he offered to sign the group immediately.

Needless to say, the budding young producer was elated. When he told the group of his efforts, and the upcoming photo shoot at Right On!, they were convinced it was all a joke. But as Marshall began to elaborate on his meetings, they began to see that his amazing report was all too real, and that their dreams were about to come true.

The photo shoot went well, and the editors published a full story and a great set of photos of what was an unusually handsome set of potential new teenage "heartthrobs." Almost immediately, the Right On article received an overwhelming response, producing huge mailbags filled with fan letters to the group from around the nation, rivaling the powerhouse teen acts the Jackson Five and The Sylvers. The stage was set.

Amazingly, just as legendary Motown act *The Temptations* were a combination of two local groups from different High Schools who combined members, so Aphrodisia emerged in like manner. And in both instances, the leader of the group and the bass singer (*Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin/Dana Marshall and Kenneth Woods*) were from one High School group, and the other members from another.

This "coincidence" was a clear early sign of the ultimate historic role of Aphrodisia in shaping what came to be known as "the New Motown" - the New Sound of Los Angeles. The next few months were to literally change the course of modern black music...

Despite his years of experience in the producer's chair, the legendary Fuqua took his new young producer under his wing, allowing him to fully participate in the tried and tested Motown hit-making process. The quality of the original Aphrodisia demos had convinced Fuqua that Marshall was capable of handling much of the production chores himself.

Essentially, Fuqua simply oversaw the project, adding guidance and insuring the "hit-quality" of the tracks. And as it was done in those days, he brought in a string and horn arranger and full orchestra to "sweeten" Marshall's rhythm arrangements and innovative mixes, with the highly rehearsed Aphrodisia band performing in stellar fashion.

In addition, Marshall's experience in singing harmony with the Sylvers family gave his vocal arrangements an added dimension to the tried and true formula of Fuqua and the legendary Smokey Robinson's earlier work with the Temptations, the late great *Marvin Gaye* and many others.

The amazing new sound that Fuqua and Marshall crafted in those early sessions in 1974, at the legendary Sound Factory West Studios in Los Angeles, was by all accounts groundbreaking in its innovation and creativity; skillfully combining the unprecedented pop music excellence of the Motown foundation with the unique new colors and flavors coming from the finest young local artists and musicians of South Central L.A.

Unfortunately for Marshall - and the world - soon after the first four tracks were completed, Fuqua left his production deal with RCA and moved his operation to Fantasy Records, based in northern California, without so much as a notice to Marshall and Aphrodisia.

The group members speculated that they may have been the unwitting victims of a tax write-off scheme, and simply continued to pursue their dreams in the music business. As for Marshall, he eventually became fully aware of the true reason for the sudden change in Fuqua's enthusiasm.

The real truth of what transpired at Fuqua III Productions in 1974, and the revelation of this historic music industry mystery, and early development of what came to be celebrated around the world as "The Sound of Los Angeles," will soon be revealed for all the world to see.

As a touring bassist with The Sylvers in the 70's, Marshall was then fully introduced to the live performance aspect of show business at the highest level - performing on the same bill with a diverse array of top entertainers, including *Bill Cosby, Sonny and Cher, Kool and The Gang, Chicago, The Dramatics, Tony Orlando and Dawn, Ringo Starr, The Bar-Kays, Englebert Humperdinck*, and many others.

After leaving the group in the summer of '77, Marshall began a personal quest for clarity, purpose and mission. And in late September of 1979, at age twenty-five, Marshall experienced a life changing spiritual transformation, becoming a "born-again" believer in Christ. Yet another major turning point...

During the decade of the eighties, as a singer songwriter, studio musician, arranger and producer for Leon Sylvers III's, Silverspoon Productions, Marshall was privileged to work with such legendary recording artists as *The Whispers, Gladys Knight & the Pips, The Brothers Johnson, The Spinners, Glenn Jones, Tavares* and others.

Among the notable songs Marshall co-wrote at Silverspoon are The Spinners' hit single, '(We Have Come Into) Our Time For Love,' The Brothers Johnson classic, 'You Keep Me Coming Back,' and the Glenn Jones hit ballad, 'Bring Back Your Love.'

In addition, Marshall's abiding sense of divine purpose as an artist found expression through various Bible study groups and fellowship with industry standouts *Ricky Sylvers, Steve Arrington, Butch Tavares, Mark DeBarge, Wardell Potts Jr., Sidney Justin* and many others.

By 1984, at age thirty, after experiencing first-hand the moral quagmires and compromises so prevalent in the music industry, Marshall began to search anew for a higher plane. That same year, he met and formed a partnership with 'Silterspoon' writer-musician *Kevin Walker*, who shared his vision of creating quote "secular" music for Christ.

Ultimately - and ironically - as artists, they walked away from a Motown-distributed record deal, when the executives involved - including Marshall's childhood friend Leon Sylvers III - insisted upon exercising "creative control."

In September of 1985, Marshall's renewed spiritual quest led to receiving a divine call to Kingdom ministry. In the Spring of 1986, he received a direct Divine revelation of the true identity of the supposed "African American" people as descendants of the ancient Israelites. By 1989, at age thirty-five, along with business partner and covenant brother Walker, Marshall was led by the Holy Spirit into an extended music industry hiatus...

The decade of the '90's found Marshall seeking greater divine understanding, in a season of deep soul searching, spiritual preparation and community activism.

In the fall of 1992, Marshall conceived the groundbreaking L.A. public access TV program *Preparing The Way*. In April of '93, he and Walker officially launched the program, written and produced by Marshall and hosted and co-produced by Walker. By that time, both men had begun to prophesy and teach at various churches and Bible study groups around the city.

By the end of the decade, the program and ministry outreach as a whole had been firmly established; and continues to enlighten, inform and inspire the greater Los Angeles community, the nation and the world.

The early 21st century saw Marshall - now divinely renamed Yashah Ben-Y'shua - moving in anointed apostolic calling and gifting...

In 2003, Ben Y'shua built and launched the revolutionary Messianic Hebrew Yisraelite website *Preparing.org*, focused on the prophetic ministry of brother Walker, now called Shabar Ben Lewi, which served as a vehicle for delivering the 'new wine' revelation of Kingdom order to the body of Messiah-Christ around the world.

With powerful new cultural revelation and inspiration, Shaleakh Yashah has now resumed his mission in creating an all-new musical genre. Along with Elder Shabar, he has also begun to build a new independent label, *Mayim Records*, along with the new Global Messianic-Christian Hebrew Yisraelite associations, *The Church at Victorville* and *The Kingdom of Yissrayel Community Network*.

The esteemed Elder's renewed musical vision includes removing man-made boundaries between true "love songs" and the sacred genres, and thereby helping to usher in a Hebraic cultural revolution; helping to shift the global atmosphere, and create a new climate for Kingdom advancement.

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