



KINGDOM OF YISRAEL COMMUNITY NETWORK

VICTORVILLE, CA

MUSIC BIO

Yashah Ben Y'shua was born George Michael Wilson III on March 4, 1954, to Mr. & Mrs. George Wilson Jr. of Los Angeles, California. At age eleven months, young George was adopted from the Children's Home Society of Los Angeles by Mr. & Mrs. Aaron F. Marshall, and rechristened Dana Aaron Marshall.

As a toddler, young Dana showed a highly unusual talent in speaking and in music. When he quoted from the biblical book of Psalms at age two, his astonished parents predicted he would grow up to be a lawyer or a preacher.

By the early 1960's, young Dana's blossoming talents 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 held at the Wilshire Ebell Theater in Los Angeles.

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

Earlier that year, young Dana'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, he was introduced to the family's eldest brother Leon, who was sixteen at the time, and a conga player with the local band of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, that performed with his singing group, "The Statues of Soul." These events would later prove to be the main crossroad of young Dana's entire musical life - setting the teenager on a course toward his ultimate destiny and purpose.

The young actor soon discovered that like himself, both Leon and James Sylvers were aspiring 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 (May He Rest in Peace) and Ricky.

The new 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 the 18-year-old Dana's first published work, entitled *Only My Love Is True*. In the summer of 1974, his second published song, 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 L.A., the young songwriter discovered an amazing five-man singing group from Crenshaw High School called "The Five Enlightens." The group's 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 *Aphrodesia*, and took the group into the recording studio. Using the well-rehearsed musicians from his *Aphrodesia* Band, Marshall produced a self-financed sixteen-track demo; a professional production at the time.

He 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.

Soon after the sessions were completed, Marshall began to shop his demo to the major record labels based in Hollywood. However, his initial efforts at finding a label for his new group, including Motown Records, were unsuccessful. Despite his persistence, the budding young producer 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 at the time, that regularly featured fellow teen groups the Sylvers and *the Jackson Five*.

When he arrived in the outer office, he asked if the editor was available. To Marshall's surprise, he was escorted into the main office without so much as even giving the receptionist his name.

The magazine's editor, Flo Jenkins, an affable young black woman with an engaging smile, welcomed Marshall and asked why he had come to visit her. He 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. She then told Marshall, quote, "Go down to the RCA Building on Sunset, and you'll find the offices of Fuqua III Productions. And tell them Flo 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 Motown's founder, *Berry Gordy Jr.*

He 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 Gordy and the legendary *Diana Ross*, whose portrayal of the late 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 somehow discourage Fuqua from hearing him out. Fortunately for him, 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 young producer was elated. When he finally told the group of his efforts, and their scheduled photo shoot for 'Right On' the following week, 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 of success in the music business were about to become a reality.

The group interview 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.

Just as the legendary Motown act *The Temptations* were a combination of two groups from different High Schools who combined members, so Aphrodesia emerged in like manner. And in both instances, the leader of the group and its bass singer were from one High School group, and the other members from another.

This apparent "coincidence" was a clear early sign of the ultimate historic role of Aphrodesia in shaping what soon 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 Harvey Fuqua took Marshall under his wing, and allowed his new young protege to fully participate in the tried and tested Motown hit-making process. The quality of the original Aphrodesia demos had convinced Fuqua that Marshall was capable of handling much of the production chores himself.

The veteran producer simply oversaw the project, adding guidance, and insuring the "hit-quality" of the basic tracks. And as it was done in those days, Fuqua hired a string and horn arranger and full orchestra to "sweeten" Marshall's arrangements and innovative mixes, with the highly rehearsed Aphrodesia rhythm section performing in stellar fashion.

In addition, with years of experience in singing harmony with the Sylvers, Marshall's vocal arrangements brought an added dimension to the tried-and-true formula of Fuqua, and another Fuqua discovery, the late great *Marvin Gaye*. As well as the legendary Motown hitmaker Smokey Robinson, who later supported the young group at its showcase performance for the RCA brass.

The amazing new sound that Fuqua and Marshall crafted in those early recording sessions at the Sound Factory West Studios in Los Angeles in 1974, was by all accounts groundbreaking in its innovation and creativity; skillfully combining the 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 Aphrodesia - and the music buying public - soon after the first several tracks were completed, Fuqua abandoned his production deal with RCA Records and moved his entire operation to Fantasy Records, based in northern California, without so much as a notice to Marshall and the group.

The 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 RCA Records and elsewhere in 1974, along with the 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 mid 1970's, Marshall was fully introduced to the live performance aspect of the music 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*, *Englebert Humperdinck*, *The Bar-Kays*, and many others.

Soon after leaving the group in the summer of '77 for financial reasons, 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 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*, *Eddie Money*, 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 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. Earlier that year, Marshall met and formed a partnership with Silverspoon staff writer-musician *Kevin Walker*, who shared his vision of creating quote "secular" music for Christ.

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

In September of 1985, Marshall's ongoing spiritual quest led to his receiving a divine call to Kingdom ministry. The following spring, 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 the veteran musician seeking greater divine understanding, in a season of deep soul searching, spiritual preparation and community activism. By the fall of 1992, Marshall created the groundbreaking southern California public access TV program, *Preparing The Way*.

In April of '93, he and Walker officially launched the program, written and directed by Marshall and hosted and produced by Walker. By that time, both men had begun to prophesy and teach at various churches and Bible study groups across South Central L.A. By the end of the decade, the program and ministry outreach as a whole had been firmly established; and continues to enlighten and inspire the greater Los Angeles community, the nation and the world.

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

In 2003, Ben Y'shua 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 Christ around the world.

With powerful new cultural revelation, Elder Yashah has now resumed his divine mission to create and distribute an all-new musical genre – RUAKH.

He has also begun to build a new independent label, *Mayim Records*, along with the new non-501c3 Global Messianic Hebrew Yisraelite associations, *The Church at Victorville*, *The Kingdom of Yisrael Community Network*, and it's broadcast outreach platform, *KYCNRadio.com*

Elder Yashah's renewed musical vision includes removing man-made boundaries between true "love songs" and the sacred genres, like unto the biblical Song of Solomon, and thereby helping to usher in a Hebraic cultural revolution, by shifting the global atmosphere, and create a new climate for Kingdom advancement.

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