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Mighty singer Phil Perry is helping to redefine the art of singing ballads . . . lovingly

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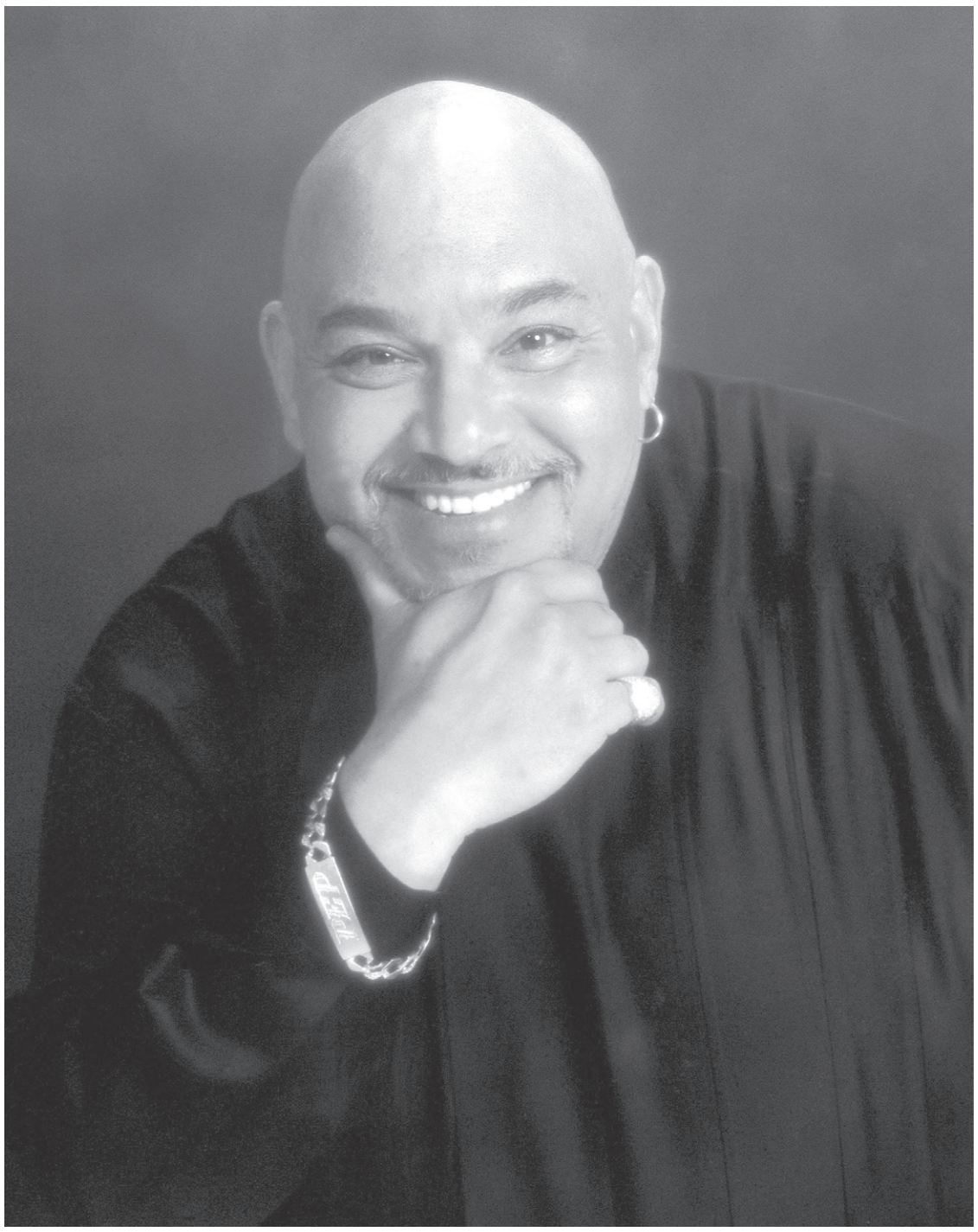
Phil Perry may not be a household name yet but his name does evoke deep admiration from devout R&B and soul fans around the world. Perry's rich and velvety tenor, unrivaled falsetto and smooth, soulful and compelling voice have set him in a class by himself. His ability to convey the deepest meaning with a simple turn of a phrase, whisper or inflection in just the right place, has long made him the go-to-man for music insiders.

Perry's vocal talents have been sought after by everyone from Patti LaBelle, Anita Baker, Peabo Bryson and George Duke to Quincy Jones, Barbra Streisand, Boz Scaggs and Rod Stewart. In 2006, the celebrated balladeer delighted old fans and was introduced to a generation of new ones with his Shanachie Entertainment debut, *Classic Love Songs*, which featured some of the most loved R&B classics from the past forty years. On June 26, Perry released his second album for Shanachie Entertainment, *A Mighty Love*, another dynamic collection of music that has inspired the celebrated singer.

"There is a lot of anger still in our society today being vented in music," confides Perry. "If I was younger and looking at the world the way it is now, I would be angry too. When you have kids you think about the world that they will inherit. I want to make sure I am leaving my kids a loving world and not an angry world. There is no hope in anger. I am not reinventing the wheel with the music I am making, it is just romantic music but I am trying to express these things in a different light through positivity."

Although he's not reinventing the wheel, he is helping to redefine the art of singing ballads. What makes *A Mighty Love* so enjoyable is his individual and highly personalized interpretation of some of R&B's enduring classics. His uncanny ability to tell a story and make it real for the listener along with his warm inviting tenor, flawless intonation and soulful phrasing make you hear these songs in a new light.

A Mighty Love features many of Perry's personal favorites such as "Just to See Her," a hit for Smokey Robinson in the late 80s and Gamble & Huff's 1972 classic "If you Don't Know Me by Now," which Teddy Pendergrass sang with Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. Perry's version of the latter is one of the album's show-stopping, bring-down-the-house kind of numbers. The singer, who bares it all on this track, shares, "There is a bit of an introvert in every artist and there are some songs that make you go somewhere else and that is the beauty of music. You can deny it so much and then it will only have its way. It is a lot like love. You can confine it but it will eventually have its way and when it does you have no control."



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A Mighty Love also showcases the singer's extraordinary coverage of such conscious and arresting numbers as War's #1 pop single "The World is A Ghetto," which hit the charts and remained on them for more then 68 weeks and became Billboard's "Album of the Year" in 1972. This is also the first radio single on *A Mighty Love*. Perry's version of Bernard Ighner's "Everything Must Change" is spell-binding; everything from his vocal quality to his timing stops you in your tracks which is no small feat considering that this song has been recorded by everyone from Nina Simone and Randy Crawford to Quincy Jones.

Other high points on the CD include a memorable version of the Isaac Hayes and Adrienne Anderson composition "Déjà Vu," which was a Grammy-winning hit for Dionne Warwick. Perry shares, "Anytime I hear Dionne Warwick I instantly go back to when I was a kid and what it felt like to hear her sing. I grew up when the airplay on radio was not as constrained. I would hear these great singers and their artistry not only gave me a different outlet but it gave me something else to aspire to be."

Perry's favorite track on the recording is the Christopher Cross composition "Ride Like the Wind," which ironically, is the lone "non-romantic" song on the CD. "I did not really know what the song meant until I read the lyrics," confesses Perry. "The character in the song sings that he was raised by a lawless man and that he too grows up to be lawless. He finds himself in a situation that he has to shoot his way out of and he is sentenced to hang. The guy ends up escaping and so he has to ride like the wind. If I was in that situation, I would want to see my mother again, my home again and the things I remember from my youth one more time. I tried to convey the sense of urgency. Singing this song I was really inside the story and you really had to have a gifted songwriter to put someone inside your own story."

A Mighty Love once again joins him with producer extraordinaire Chris 'Big Dog' Davis, who produced Perry's Shanachie debut *Classic Love Songs*. "It was a conscious effort to follow up the kind of songs I recorded on the first CD. Recording these two CDs for Shanachie and working with someone like Chris Davis, whom I trust and who trusts me, has been a real blessing," he says. "With every project that we do together we know more about one another musically and personally. Over the years we have become good friends and that supersedes the music in the end." Chris 'Big' Dog contributes the one original song on the album, "Honor."

Perry was born and raised in East St. Louis and was exposed to the art of great singing at an early age. "Growing up I always knew that I wanted to be a singer," recalls Perry. With *A Mighty Love*, the singer is also giving back—paying tribute to the songs and artists who have inspired him, as well as giving the gift of an ultimate romantic expression through music to his fans. With this album his goal is simple. "I hope when people hear *A Mighty Love* they come away with a sense of romance in life that is rarely expressed in music today."

As a son, husband, father of four and one of R&B's most revered balladeers, Phil Perry knows a thing or two about love. "The most important thing in any relationship is to continually remind yourself of the etymology of commitment. There are few words in the English language that are 'no matter what' kind of words; words that mean whatever it takes," says the romantic crooner. "We live in a microwave society. A kind of flavor of the month society where if it is broken we say we will just go and get another one. So commitment is the key."

In addition to his achievements as an artist, Perry has been actively working to foster arts education through the Philill Foundation, a organization founded and led by his wife of twenty years, Lillian "Tang" Tynes, a notable soul and jazz vocalist in her own right. "It's important to me," he admits, "because my wife has a vision for a charter school that educates through all genres of the arts. Also we are both artists so we wanted to give back to the youth through art and education."

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