

The Bass King!

■■■.....By Helen Marketti



Enjoying Motown success with his band, Ozone then playing with Little Richard for twenty-five years with countless projects and performances in between, it is easy to see why Charles Glenn is The Bass King!

Charles Glenn has been playing since his early teens. "I taught myself to play the bass guitar when I was around thirteen years old," remembers Charles. "I had a friend who got a guitar for Christmas. I spent that whole year playing bass guitar parts on his guitar. I started thinking that if I could get a bass guitar of my own then we could start a band. The following Christmas I was able to talk my mother into getting one and then we were able to get our band going."

He continues, "The first song I learned to play was Papa Was a Rolling Stone by The Temptations. I was so excited that I played it all night. Another thing too about playing the bass is that I was so infatuated with it that it caught my father's attention. He had never seen me show interest in anything like this before and it worried him. He told me he would lock the bass in the trunk if I didn't start doing something else with my life. Then he saw me play bass at a concert with Sammy Davis, Jr. who was one of my father's favorite artists. After he saw that show, he never said anything to me again about playing the bass." (Laughs)

Charles is from Nashville and it is where he first got together

with fellow musicians and created the band, Ozone before moving to Los Angeles. "We played pretty steady at a club in LA that was called Century 3000. That was an amazing place to play in. There was a glass window behind the band so people could see us from the street. I remember lines of people waiting to get in. The lines wrapped around the corner and down the block. Our band was creating a buzz back then. Our manager at the time was friends with Billy Preston. He brought Billy by the club one night to see us. Three weeks after that, we were in Alaska with Billy. I was only seventeen at this time."

"We recorded five albums together as Ozone. We had played in nearly every venue and played with many big names. (Lionel Richie, Sammy Davis, Jr., Luther Vandross, DeBarge and Teena Marie). After we moved on past the Motown label, we broke up. We did have a lot of success together but I think everyone was burned out. Our success was created through Motown. They teach you how to be a number one artist. It was through Billy Preston that I met Little Richard." Little Richard liked the way Charles played and offered him a spot in his band.

Charles has played bass guitar for Little Richard for twenty-five years. "He has been like a second father to me. What's really something is that my parents knew Little Richard for many years prior but that had nothing to do with me joining his band as many would think," said Charles. "In the early days when Little Richard would come to town and perform in the local clubs, my father worked as a bartender at the time so he often served Little Richard and they struck up a friendship. It wasn't until years later that Little Richard said he remembered my parents."

"About a year and a half after my parents passed away," recalls Charles. "Little Richard called me and said 'Charles, I'm going to be your dad. I'm not taking your father's place because he was my

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friend but I feel that I should step in." Ever since then, no matter where we are he introduces me as his son before I play my solos. He is amazing."

Inspiration for music is always on the radar for Charles. "I can be inspired by something I've seen or read. I'm feeling music right now and deciding if or when I'm going to do something about it. I have always had a beat in my head, even



Charles Glenn with Little Richard

as a young man. I like to listen to all instruments in a composition. I appreciate everything."

In addition to playing with Little Richard, one of the most recent projects for Charles is the release of his CD, Nonstop. "It has twelve tracks and one of them is a cover of Stop, Look & Listen by The Stylistics. I have my friend, El DeBarge singing on it."

Charles never tires of doing what he loves. "As I get older, I still want to keep going. I never find this is getting old. I want to keep playing. I feel what I do is create excitement when I play. When I see people catch that, it's pretty mind blowing. People have often told me that I am one of the most exciting bass players they have ever seen. I like that."

For more information about Charles Glenn, please visit: www.thebassking.com

His new CD, Nonstop is available through his web site and iTunes.

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