



Nita Whitaker

For a mother of two young children, winner of Star Search, star of "Ragtime" and former Miss Louisiana, singer Nita Whitaker, who gave her first public performance at age three, has a wealth of experience to impart and the voice to do it. A protégé of writer/producer/musician David Foster, Ms. Whitaker's recently released CD, *One Voice*, is an album of songs which reflects the various aspects of the path(s) she has followed and continues to follow, to mature as a singer and a balanced, focused person.

The youngest child in a family of four children, Whitaker was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the heart of the Baptist faith. "Although I have been singing virtually all of my life, my family encouraged excellence in school and pursuit of a stable career, so I did just that...and kept singing." A graduate of Northeast Louisiana University with a B.S. degree in nursing, Ms. Whitaker studied classical voice while in college, then segued into training for both gospel and pop vocalization. She is equally comfortable in jazz and classical styles as she is in the inspirational-pop genre.

Ms. Whitaker gained national attention during her year as Miss Louisiana and subsequent Miss America bid. Her big break, after having come to Los Angeles, was winning "Star Search" hosted by Ed McMahon. Whitaker also enjoys a successful stage and television career, with numerous guest starring roles in series, specials and network Movies-of-the-Week, as well as live theatre work as diverse as "Mr. and Mrs. Jones," "Sweeney Todd" and "Ragtime." She has also appeared in such films as "Lush Life," "Bodyguard" and "Betrayal of the Dove."

So how does the former choir director at a simple wood-floored church in rural Frierson, Louisiana attribute her association with musician-arrangers the caliber of Peter Matz, Richard Marx, Carol King, Carole Bayer Sager and David Foster? It is in no small part to her willingness to devote her talents to events ranging from Muhammad Ali's "Fight Night" and Andre Agassi's "Grand Slam for Kids" to this past fall's World Children's Day, performances at the Crystal Cathedral and the recent Los Angeles-Beverly Hills 13th Annual NAACP Theatre Awards.

Ms. Whitaker balances writing and performing with her family life, shared with husband and voice-over guru Don LaFontaine and girls Skye (age 12) and Lisi (8).