

Young Torrance Vocalist on Way To Top With Hit Tune, 'Banana'

Popular singer Johnny Proprietor, of 4808 Carson St., is a young man who knows exactly where he's going. His main concern is that he doesn't feel he's getting there fast enough. At the very mature age of 26 years, Johnny's not really worried, but is concerned enough about his career to be doing something about it.

His current RCA Victor recording of "Banana" may well launch Johnny on the famed singing career he's been seeking since he was a youngster in New York.

"Banana" is a novelty tune about a gal the vocalist has named Banana because she never leaves the bunch. And he wants to be alone with her.

WHAT ABOUT this young Torrance vocalist? Who is he? Where's he been?

Johnny was born March 15, 1932, in Rochester, N. Y., a city which has produced a number of other popular entertainment figures. When he was 12 years old and in the 8th grade, his teacher realized he had an unusually good voice.

At the very important age of 16, Johnny hopes "Banana" will sell and "let him live." Johnny disc jockey Frank Whittaker apparently thinks it will. After hearing the record, he said:

BEFORE HE had a chance to begin his career, the service next caught up with him and he spent the years from 1950 to 1952 in the Navy.

He was discharged from the service in San Francisco, and almost immediately got his first job singing in a night club in nearby Redwood City. From there he made appearances in San Jose, then in Los Angeles, sang with Vito Manno, Frankie Carle and Ted Fio Rito, appeared numerous times on the Chief Miliari TV Show, and did guest appearances on the Art Linkletter and Steve Allen Shows. The latter was during a New York visit.

Most memorable among his TV appearances was the time he was on Red Skelton's Thanksgiving Show playing the role of a honky-tonk piano player in a bar. On the show, Skelton had just had an argument with his girl friend, and brought a live turkey named Genevieve into the bar. He and the bird plunked themselves down on bar stools and made unusual conversation and requests while drinking. "We rehearsed a week for that one—and I really enjoyed working with Red. He's a great guy," Johnny says with a smile.

JOHNNY MADE a few recordings while singing every night in a south Los Angeles night club. He did a couple of recordings for Dot Records, including "Evicted From Heaven" and "I Was Born Last Monday." He also recorded the score for Dan Dailey's picture, "The Girl Next Door," for Coral Records and did "Stop The Music" for RCA Victor with Henri Rene's orchestra.

The young singer got his most recent break with RCA through his contact with Al Rinker, one of the former Three Rhythm Boys (the other two were Bing Crosby and Harry Barris). Rinker, a song writer, uses Johnny to make his demonstration records, and during a recent session in New York, RCA officials listening to one of Al's records were so impressed with Johnny's singing that they asked if he were available. Al assured them he was, called Johnny in Torrance and cinched the deal that resulted in the recording of "Banana," current top tune being distributed in Europe as well as throughout the U. S.

Johnny's recording of "Banana" has been the number one tune in Des Moines, Iowa, and among the top 10 in New York City and Miami. It was picked by Variety as the "best set of the week," and by The Cash Box as "Sleeper of the Week." Cash Box says "Banana" could skyrocket Johnny to stardom.

JOHNNY'S ON tour now playing "Banana" and other hit tunes and appearances in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Washington and Baltimore. He was on the Dick Clark Show (ABC) originating from Philadelphia the Buddy Dean Show in Baltimore, and

will wind up his tour with appearances at the Mardi Gras Club in Baltimore.

His wife, Ellen, and their three youngsters (Lee Ann, 3; Melissa, 2; and Johnny Jr., 1) are staying in Baltimore during his RCA record tour. Ellen, "Miss Baltimore of 1953," met Johnny in Hollywood during shooting of Ray Norman's independent production, "Naughty New Orleans." Ellen was playing the part of a singer, and Johnny that of a singer. They were married shortly thereafter (1954) in Las Vegas. Ellen, incidentally, is the cousin of Leona Gage, the controversial gal who gave up the Miss United States title last year when it was discovered she was married.

IN ADDITION to all his night club appearances and record sessions of late, Johnny found time recently to do a role in "The Rebel," for Republic Studios, in which he appears with Sal Mineo.

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1. Remember that many of the native plants including Cleome, Freziera and others require very little water even during the warm spells.
2. Sow perennial seeds: Delphinium, Oriental poppy, Gerbera, if weather is cool enough.
3. Keep on watering young fruit trees, but be careful not to overwater—especially citrus.
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5. Keep camellias and rhododendrons well watered, especially if they are in containers.

nured as a potential hit, he remarked:
"I think Johnny Proprietor should change his name to Profit."

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Temple Menorah Picnic Scheduled for Sunday

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This is the first of a number of activities being planned for the coming year by Temple Menorah.

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