Audiotape Log

Researcher’s Name: Kevin R. Dyess

Event: Interview with Kajavia Bean

Place: 740-B Clear Brook Drive, Oxford, Mississippi

Date: May 22, 2007

The following is a catalog of a tape-recorded interview with 24 year-old Kajavia Bean at the home of Kevin Dyess at 740-B Clear Brook Drive in Oxford, Mississippi. Kajavia is a coloratura soprano who sings backup with her church gospel choir in Batesville, Mississippi:

Introductory comments concerning our first meeting at Walmart in Oxford to get a haircut.

Kajavia was born and raised by her grandmother in Batesville, Mississippi; she works as a cosmetologist at Walmart in Oxford where I first heard her singing along with a broadcast from a gospel music radio station.

Kajavia was influenced, musically speaking, by her father’s side of the family.

Kajavia attends Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Batesville.

Kajavia relates that one of her earliest childhood remembrances was when she was about five or six years old and being asked to perform in a pageant …. She sang “Jesus, How I Love the Call of your Name.”

Kajavia has never had any music lessons, but she expressed a desire to build on her talent; she never even had general music class in school.

Kajavia tells that the musical role model in her childhood was the gospel choir in her church; this was her inspiration for singing.

[elapsed time: 10 minutes]

Kajavia really can’t say that she has any performers that she looks up to, except for the blues singer Johnny Taylor

Singing and participating in the gospel choir is the way that Kajavia developed her musical ear.
Kajavia enjoys attending gospel quartet singing on Sunday evenings; this is her favorite type of musical event to attend.

Kajavia says that there is a marked difference in the traditional type of gospel versus contemporary styles of gospel singing.

She says that gospel music is always accompanied; that is, the singing is done with various instruments including guitar, keyboard, or synthesizer.

Kajavia can't remember a time when she didn't have music in her life; some of the other types of music she enjoys are bluegrass, country, and rap. Some of her favorite performers include Keith Irvine and Kenny Chesney.

Kajavia says that gospel has been influenced by other styles such as rap and blues.

[elapsed time: 20 minutes]

Kajavia says that she is drawn to music because it affects her emotions and feelings; it also helps the work day go by better.

Getting involved in gospel music, for Kajavia, was a result of being grounded in the church; this is very much a part of her family and community life.

Kajavia relates that the advice she would give to an aspiring young gospel musician is to look for the message that the words are meant to communicate.

Kajavia seldom sings solo; she prefers to be a backup singer or one who sings with a number of people who sing simultaneously as in a group; she admits to being a little shy.

Kajavia tells that the music she sings is primarily sung from memory so that the words of the song can be communicated most effectively.

She says that she mostly learns music from just listening.

The give and take (adding or subtracting rhythms or modifying pitches) that a lot of singers of this style of music is something done just to impart a personal "flavor" to the music.

[elapsed time: 30 minutes]

Kajavia admits that Michele Williams, who sings with Beyonce, is someone she aspires to pattern her voice after - this person has a "pure" sound where she doesn't sing merely to show off her voice, which she says that a lot of singers do which has a distracting effect.
Some of Kajavia’s favorite songs are Beyonce’s “Irreplaceable,” Mary Mary’s “Cried My Last Tear Today,” and the country song “Don’t Get Too High on the Bottle.”

Kajavia feels a little shy about her singing, especially with a new song or in front of a new audience.

Kajavia says that she performs at various times of the month when the group gets together at her church or in the surrounding area; she even admits to planning a trip to California in the near future with her church choir to perform at a church attended by former members of her church in Batesville. There is even the possibility on this trip of making a CD.

[elapsed time: 40 minutes]

Kajavia recommends going to hear the “Jones Sisters” and “Chosen” in Oxford; the “Jones Sisters have performed in a couple of movies based on stories of John Grisham

[elapsed time: 45 minutes]