

The story of MIDNIGHT STAR began in 1976 on the campus of Kentucky State University in Frankfort, KY. Two musical kindred spirits, trumpeter Reggie Calloway and saxophonist Bill Simmons, set their sights on creating a new band. The two friends had a vision of assembling spectacular musicians and entertainers who shared their dream of making it big in the music industry. Reggie and Bill enlisted fellow Kentucky State University students Belinda Lipscomb (lead vocals), Kenneth Gant (bass, vocals) Jeff Cooper (guitar), Boaz Watson (lead vocals, keyboards), Melvin Gentry (vocals, guitar, drums) to join in their quest for greatness. The group quickly developed a reputation locally as a jamming party band at dances, covering top 40 material of the day. They later added guitarist Dana Mattison and trombonist Vincent Calloway (Reggie's younger brother).

As the group pursued their journey into the music business, MIDNIGHT STAR demonstrated natural camaraderie rarely experienced in the industry. This type of immediate unity cannot be forced or replicated: college friends dedicated to living together, enjoying themselves and sharing their passion for music. They rehearsed 5-days a week and toured clubs throughout Kentucky, Ohio & Indiana. Within two-years of its inception MIDNIGHT STAR showcased in New York City. This 1978 showcase inspired SOLAR Records chief Dick Griffey to sign the group to his label.

After being signed, the group was swiftly swept into the studio to record its first album, *THE BEGINNING*. The album wasn't an instant success, but it was a promising debut that made for some terrific listening. Released in 1980 *THE BEGINNING* spawned one minor hit, "Make It Last" and also received meaningful airplay with the soulful ballad "Searching for Love".

The group was still establishing a name for themselves on the national stage with the release of their second album, *STANDING TOGETHER* in 1981. Two mid-charting singles "I've Been Watching You" and "Tuff" exuded the characteristics of how great the band would soon be. In 1982 the third album, *VICTORY*, which yielded the mid-charting "Hot Spot," was an exercise in experimentation when Dick Griffey suggested that the band produce the album themselves with Reggie Calloway at the helm. Also, drummer Bobby Lovelace joined the group in late 1982, freeing Melvin Gentry to sing and play guitar exclusively.

SOLAR Records stuck by the group and the patience would pay off in 1983. On the fourth album, the phenomenal *NO PARKING ON THE DANCE FLOOR*, MIDNIGHT STAR was able to reap the rewards of its hard work. The technofunk classic "Freak-A-Zoid", the title cut "No Parking On The Dance Floor" and the absorbing "Wet My Whistle" helped propel the group to new heights and launched MIDNIGHT STAR into superstar status. The album, though, did not rely on growth solely from the single releases. Album cuts were beginning to jump off the vinyl, as the vibrant "Electricity" and the romantic ballad, "Slow Jam," made their respective paths to the dance floors and radio airwaves. The *NO PARKING ON THE DANCE FLOOR* album reached an amazing milestone in the group's career with an over 2-million units sold and RIAA Double Platinum Certification.

Album five, *PLANETARY INVASION*, led way the following year with the group's first No. 1 R&B hit, "Operator." Using the creativity of a busy phone line signal and an operator's voice, the tune was completely mesmerizing and managed to remain at the No. 1 position for five weeks. The infectious and timeless album track "Curious" pushed its way onto radio and is still favorite to listening audiences to this day! "Curious has been sampled multiple time by various Hip Hop artist. *PLANETARY INVASION* also became a huge success across the Atlantic, elevating MIDNIGHT STAR to international status. MIDNIGHT STAR struck gold again in 1986 with the exploding *HEADLINES* album, which opened the group's next period with a hit single of the same title. But another single from the album, the golden "Midas Touch," really made the difference. The tune's gentle melody created another bonified chart topper. This would be the last album with the Calloway brothers, who left the band to pursue a career as music producers. The group carried on its the hit making ways with the self-titled *MIDNIGHT STAR*

album in 1988. Both "Don't Rock The Boat," which featured a guest appearance by Whodini, and the quirky "Snake In The Grass" jumped into Billboard Magazine's R&B Top 10. MIDNIGHT STAR broke into the 90's with the smash "Do It (One More Time)" from their WORK IT OUT CD, an album that also featured the sultry ballads "Red Roses" and "Love of My Life".

The success of MIDNIGHT STAR gave its members the credibility and agility to write and produce for fellow Solar label-mates such as The Whispers, Klymaxx and Carrie Lucas. MIDNIGHT STAR was also responsible for bringing the funk group The Deele to the Solar roster: a six-piece outfit based out of Cincinnati, Ohio that included the powerful mix of Antonio L.A. Reid and Kenny Babyface Edmonds, who would go on to become a multi-million selling hit production team. Many MIDNIGHT STAR members pursued various outside projects. Melvin Gentry and Bo Watson created the production team "Bo & McArthur" writing, and producing hits for Shanice Wilson and Toni Braxton. Bo served as Music Director for, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds on MTV Unplugged concert series and CD. Bo also collaborated with Babyface as a writing partner, penning hits such as "Love Shoulda Brought You Home" for Toni Braxton and "Rock Steady" for the Whispers. Beautiful lead singer Belinda Lipscomb found success singing on Emmy nominated TV and Radio commercials and took her onstage talents to the theater, with lead roles in several musical comedies and gospel musicals.

After a long hiatus from the stage, it became obvious to the group that the performing bug had hit them. It was time to give themselves and fans what they all were missing... MIDNIGHT STAR concerts. The band reassembled in 1998 with Belinda Lipscomb, Melvin Gentry, Bo Watson, Bill Simmons, Kenneth Gant and Bobby Lovelace and quickly hit the concert circuit. In 1999 to support of touring, Capitol Records/Right Stuff released the MIDNIGHT STAR "Anniversary Collection" which CD covered many of their past hits. It also gave the band the opportunity to contribute a brand new "Slow Jam Live" and Freak-A-Zoid remix track for the CD. In 2002 the MIDNIGHT STAR released their first album in over 12 years, entitled "15th Avenue.

For the group, it's been a thrilling rollercoaster ride, from obscure beginnings at Kentucky State University through the halls of Solar Records and onto stardom. MIDNIGHT STAR created for itself an enviable track record that so many in the music business today would love to call their own. And not to say that hit records are the only true make-up of a group, it is what the music invokes in the listening public and the ability to sustain that feeling for a length of time. MIDNIGHT STAR continues to perform its music to sold out halls and arenas all over the world.