

# Mp3 The Legendary Escorts - We Know Yes We Can



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Inspirational R&B For Americans to accomplish Global Unity 2 MP3 Songs in this album (9:51) ! Related styles: URBAN/R&B: R&B Pop Crossover, POP: Today's Top 40 People who are interested in The Escorts should consider this download. Details: The Escorts have one distinction (which some consider somewhat dubious), of all the sweet and satin-voiced groups to grace the R&B charts in the early to mid 1970s, to being the one and only group to have started their recording career behind bars! Any discussion of the seven-man group has inevitably focused on that fact, but beyond the circumstances of their recording situation, The Escorts actually merit considerable acclaim and praise. The Escorts, aided by renowned Producer George Kerr, made some fine music, from covers of tunes popularized primarily by The Miracles such as "Ooh Baby Baby", "We've Come Too Far To End It Now" and "I Can't Stand To See You Cry" (the latter two post-Smokey charted singles), to such original songs such as "All We Need Is Another Chance" and "Disrespect Can Wreck". In a rare 1974 interview for Britain's "Blues Soul" Magazine after a weeklong stint at the famed Apollo Theater in New York, original group member Reggie Haynes recalled, "It started when I was transferred to Rahway Prison in New Jersey. While all the other guys were playing basketball or baseball, a group of us use to get together and sing all the time". The change in The Escorts' fortunes began two years later when Producer George Kerr came to the prison. Kerr had been invited to check out an annual Inmates Variety show in the facility by singer Linda Jones, whose brother was also incarcerated at the time. A former Motown songwriter and producer who had also been a member of the group, The Serenaders and whom had also spent a period of time replacing the lead singer Little Anthony (of Little Anthony The Imperials), Kerr had been working with Linda for a couple of years, enjoying success with such hits as "Hypnotized" and "That's When I'll Stop Loving You". Kerr, who masterminded all of The Escorts' early works, recalled, "Originally I didn't feel like going, but

once I was in the prison and I heard all these musicians, I liked what I saw. I remember turning to my wife and telling her that I thought it would be great to record the group. She said she thought that I was out of my mind and that I was never going to get it done. I started talking to the prison warden and explained that I was a professional record producer and he had the same reaction as my wife. The moment he said, you can't! I remembered a time when I had said that same thing to Producer Richard Barrett when he was doing a session with me and The Imperials. He told me, don't ever use that word around me!' and when the warden said the same thing to me, that gave me the incentive to show I could do it; I could record these guys, even in prison". Kerr persisted in his mission and five hundred letters and two years later, a mobile recording truck pulled up outside Rahway Prison. "I did some research and found out that it cost about \$964 to house an inmate and that if the authorities let me record them, they could pay for themselves," says Kerr. "I went before the Superintendent of Prisons in Washington DC and explained that to them. It took a lot of work but they eventually gave me permission to record The Escorts." As Reggie Haynes explained in his 1974 interview, "During those two years, guys came and guys went and the group that actually recorded the first LP, 'All We Need Is Another Chance' was almost completely different from the group that George saw at the Variety show. Happily, we always had the good fortune to find good singers and as the project grew, the guys involved took it more and more seriously. The actual line-up for the first album consisted of Haynes, Lawrence Franklin, Robert Arrington, William Dugger, Stephen Carter, Frank Heard and Marion Murphy. Carter, obviously influenced by Smokey Robinson, was lead singer on a number of songs. Kerr worked with arranger Bert Keyes on preparing the tracks at Venture Sound studios in nearby Somerville, New Jersey after rehearsing the group on regular visits to Rahway over a period of five months, using a piano in the prison auditorium. "We actually did the vocals in the psychiatric ward because it was sound-proofed!" says Kerr. "Before we did the sessions, I was on the phone to all of the New York newspapers and television stations to tell them what we were doing and when I got to the prison, there were all these newsmen with cameras..." After seeing Kerr on the news, a construction company that was planning to start a record label contacted him and The Escorts became the first act signed to Alithia Records. In all, Kerr cut eleven tunes on the group over a fourteen-hour period. Included on that first album were remakes of two songs Kerr had produced and cut with The O'Jays, "Look Over Your Shoulder" and "I'll Be Sweeter Tomorrow". Those two cuts became the first two charted singles for The Escorts, both reaching the R&B Top 100. Haynes was the first of the inmates to

be released and in June 1973, he began promoting the group's work. As he stated in '74, "People were aware of The Escorts and of course, we were somewhat unique so press people and radio stations listened. They were naturally inquisitive and some were for us and some were hostile towards us. You have to understand that we were in a maximum security prison and some folk don't understand that we have paid for our mistakes." Other tunes from the group's first album included covers of "By The Time I Get To Phoenix," "Little Green Apples" and the doo wop classic "I Only Have Eyes For You" along with "All We Need Is Another Chance," a song that referenced the group's personal situation as inmates hoping to return to society to lead productive lives, which became the obvious title track for The Escorts' debut. The album did manage to gain airplay most up and down the East Coast and not content with just recording the group, Kerr felt that a live concert would also be a milestone: "After the album came out, we got all these letters from people who wanted to see them, so I went back to the Superintendent of Prisons and asked if we could do a show". With much negotiation and with thirty policemen on duty to ensure security, The Escorts performed at Newark Symphony Hall, shackled on the way to and from the venue but clad in tuxedos and dress shoes for the show, which was a sell-out and major success. On the heels of the concert, Kerr decided to make a second album: three of the members of the group - Haynes, Franklin and Willie Quick, a longtime friend of Haynes who had replaced Stephen Carter (then serving a life sentence) - were out of prison while the other four remained inside hence the title of the group's sophomore project, "3 Down, 4 To Go." In a twist of irony, the three freed former inmates had to go back into Rahway for the recording of the album, which included the R&B-charted singles "Disrespect Can Wreck" and the ballad "Let's Make Love (At Home). Recalled Haynes in 1974, "Whom do you know that walked into a prison of their own free will! We recorded (the second album) in exactly the same way as before, except that I was able to be there when the tracks were recorded this time." The Album, Musician, featured a cover of The Delfonics' "La La Means I Love You" along with several original tunes such as "Brother" and "Corruption". After its release in 1974, Haynes, Franklin and Quick did some dates including the afore-mentioned stint at The Apollo. Reginald Haynes resurrected "The Legendary Escorts" in 1985 and the most recent members, William Billy Martin and Lagrant Harris have spent the last 20 plus years singing with Reginald Haynes. While the group's recording legacy is limited. to four (4) albums, The newest CD's, that they have are "Back To Love", "The R&B Menagerie" and the Hit Single, We Know Yes We Can which features of course, Reginald Haynes, William "Billy" Martin, And La'Grant Harris. These

CD'S and DVD's of their shows can Be Purchased through their Myspace page or you can E-mail them at lharris2@net2phoneand purchase them that way. The groups newest single, We Know Yes We Can can be brought as a digital download from cdbaby.com/thelegendaryescorts. The Group's vocal harmonic skills make listening to The Escorts' music nearly thirty years later after it was first cut inside the walls of Rahway Prison a veritable treat. For Bookings and Interviews please call directly 1-973-414-0473, or E-mail them at the e-mail address above, you can also go to their web site at legendaryescortsor call Mandana Entertainment at MandanaEnt.com, 1-917-463-3364, United Kingdom. 0798-468-4000.

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