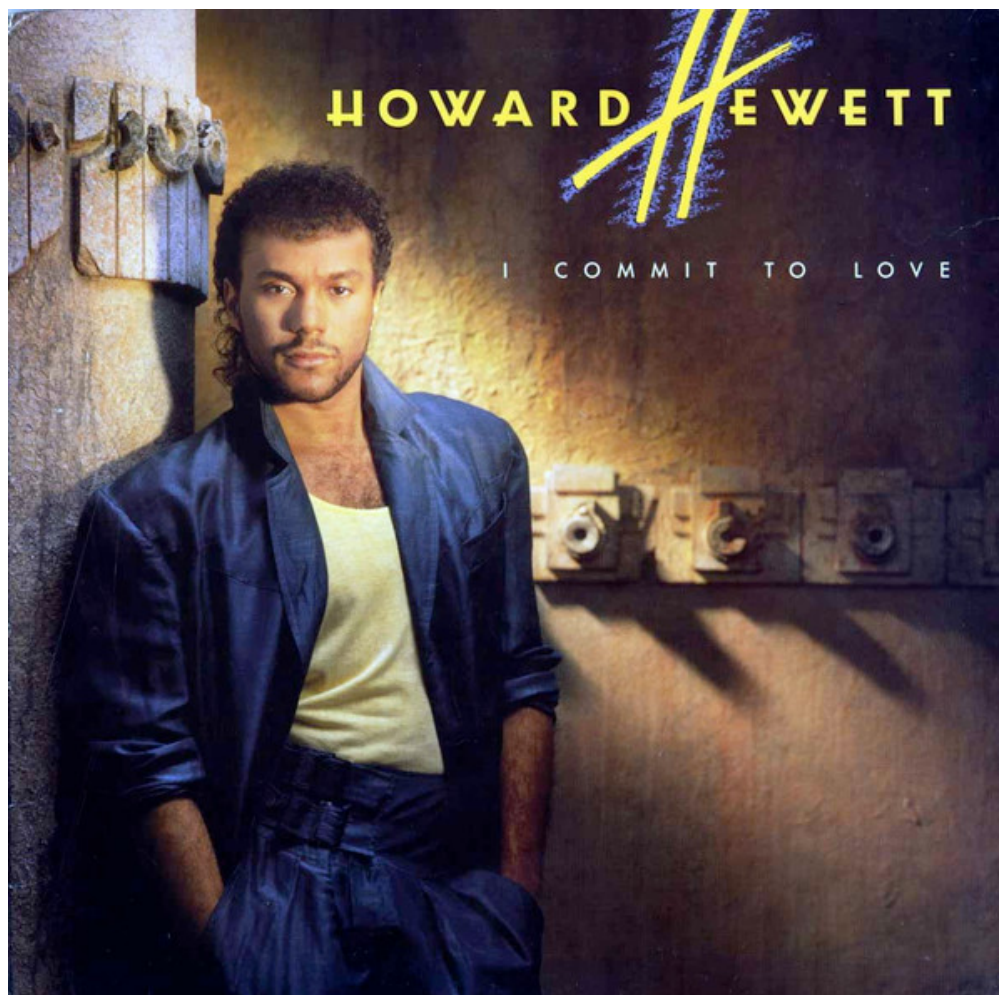


Throwback: Howard Hewett: I'm For Real



Howard Hewett left the group Shalamar in 1985 to start a solo career and in 1986 his debut album, *I Commit To Love*, was released on the Elektra label. Leon Sylvers III had shaped Shalamar's dance-oriented sound as the house producer of Dick Griffey's SOLAR Records. Griffey and Soul Train founder Don Cornelius put the group together and the trio released a collection of mainstream and club hits. Hewett's solo voice went straight into a hardcore R&B love man sound. The songs on *I Commit To Love* were slower and moved at the pace of a patient courtship. Jazz bassist, songwriter, and producer Stanley Clarke co-wrote and produced "I'm For Real" with Hewett. Clarke's versatility as a jazz player had already been tested in his musical partnership with George Duke, which

produced the pop and R&B hit “Sweet Baby” five years earlier. “I’m For Real” soothed with a warm saxophone and Hewett’s impassioned promises. Hewett’s work with Clarke on “I’m For Real” helped him grow as a balladeer and they made an R&B top ten hit. In 2025, new generations are discovering and reacting to Hewett’s “I’m For Real.” He released the single “To Thee I Pray” in 2021.