A PEOPLE’S TRIBUTE TO THE QUEEN
Thursday, August 30, 2018
Chene Park Amphitheatre
Detroit, Michigan
Program

Doors Open (5:00 PM)

Program Begins (6:00 PM)

Classical
Ave Maria
Nessun Dorma

Jazz/Blues
Ralphe Armstrong, Musical Director
Dr. Feelgood
Sky Lark
‘Til You Come Back to Me
Sista Ree

Video Tribute

Dance
Giving Him Something He Can Feel

Family Tribute

Nicole Joseph
Rodrick Dixon
Joan Belgrave
Dee Dee Bridgewater
Jean Carne
Ronnie McNair
George Faison, Choreographer
Grandchildren
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Chain of Fools
Think
A Rose is Still a Rose
Say a Little Prayer
Giving Him Something He Can Feel
Day Dreaming
(You Make Me Feel Like A) Natural Woman
Willing to Forgive You
‘Til You Come Back to Me
Never Loved a Man (The Way That I Loved You)
Jump To It

Video Tribute

Guest Tributes
Judge Greg Mathis
Pastor JoAnn Watson
Erica Peeples

All-Star Tribute
Kern Brantley, Musical Director
You’re My Greatest Inspiration
Brotha/No More Rain

Angela Davis
Kimmie Horne
Gwen Foxx
Z
KIKO (and Dancer)
Beth Griffith (and Dancers)
Cherri Black
Steffanie Christi’an
Anesha Birchett
Tasha Page-Lockhart
All Detroit Cast
Keith Washington
Angie Stone
Call Me
Woman
Rock Steady
My, My, My / Ain’t No Way
Medley

Respect

Close of Program

*Program Order and Participants are Subject to Change.*
A Portland, Oregon native, soprano Nicole Joseph received her Masters and Specialist Degree in Voice from the University of Michigan, and Bachelors in Voice from Pacific Lutheran University. Opera credits include Lauretta (Gianni Schicchi) with Sugar Creek Symphony & Song, Susanna (Figaro) and Musetta (La Bohème) with U of M Opera Theatre. As a concert soloist in the Detroit area Nicole has been heard with Flint Symphony, Oakland University, Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings and Southern Great Lakes Symphony. Outside of Michigan she has performed with McCall SummerFest, Siletz Bay Music Festival, Walla Walla Symphony, Portland Chamber Orchestra and Victoria Bach Festival. Nicole was the 2nd Place Winner in the National Bel Canto Vocal Foundation Competition in 2009 and one of two winners in 2013. She is also a Michigan District Winner in the 2010 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, 3rd Place Winner in the 2013 Nicholas Loren Vocal Competition, a semi-finalist and People’s Choice award winner in the 2014 American Traditions Competition, and a finalist in the 2014 Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition.

A gifted recitalist, Mr. Dixon earned rave reviews for his Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert broadcast, honoring Roland Hayes on WFMT-FM/Chicago. He completed a 30 city tour for Community Concerts and a duet concert “Following in the Footsteps” at Hampton University with wife Soprano Alfreda Burke, with whom he has also appeared in duet recitals for the Umbria Music Festival in Italy. The couple performed and participated in the Mandela Mandela and Miss World delegation Rise Against Hunger campaign, honoring the legacy of President Nelson Mandela. Mr. Dixon’s notable concerts with tenors Victor Cook and Thomas Young (Three Mo’ Tenors) include: Kodak Theatre with Barbra Streisand, Barry Manilow, Aretha Franklin’s dedication concert renaming a Detroit Park after her father Pastor C.L. Franklin, LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl with the Irish Tenors, Pittsburgh Symphony, Dayton Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Millennium Park, Elgin Symphony, Rackham Symphony Chorus and the Concordia Orchestra at Lincoln Center.
Joan Belgrave is Detroit’s most noted Jazz singer. Known for her soothing voice, Joan has performed at historic venues like Baker's Keyboard Lounge, The Jazz Cafe at The Music Hall, The Dirty Dog Jazz Café, The Fillmore Theatre, Orchestra Hall, and The Detroit Opera House. Nationally, she has performed at famed Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York and The Metropolitan Room. And her international travels have taken her to The Toronto Jazz Festival, Jazz à la Villette in Paris, and The Ascona Jazz Festival in Switzerland. But she is so much more.

In addition to her trademark Jazz sound, Joan has also sung Blues, Gospel, Big Band, Standards, and Contemporary R&B.

Over the course of a multifaceted career spanning four decades, Grammy and Tony Award-winning Jazz giant Dee Dee Bridgewater has ascended to the upper echelon of vocalists, putting her unique spin on standards, as well as taking in the realm of faith in re-envisioning jazz classics. Ever the fearless voyager, explorer, pioneer and keeper of tradition, the three-time Grammy-winner most recently won the Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album for Eleanora Fagan (1915-1959): To Billie With Love From Dee Dee.

Bridgewater’s career has always bridged musical genres. She earned her first professional experience as a member of the legendary Thad Jones/Mel Louis Big Band, and throughout the 70’s she performed with such jazz notables as Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon and Dizzy Gillespie. After a foray into the pop world during the 1980s, she relocated to Paris and began to turn her attention back to Jazz. Bridgewater began self-producing with her 1993 album Keeping Tradition (Polydor/Verve) and created DDB records in 2006 when she signed with the Universal Music Group as a producer (Bridgewater produces all of her own CDs). Releasing a series of critically-acclaimed CD’s, all but one, including her wildly successful double Grammy Award-winning tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, Dear Ella - have received Grammy nominations. Artist Theo Croker is signed to DDB Records and Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra also recorded a project with Dee Dee released by her label in 2014.

Bridgewater also pursued a parallel career in musical theater, winning a Tony Award for her role as “Glinda” in The Wiz in 1975. Having recently completed a run as the lead role of Billie Holiday in the off-Broadway production of Lady Day, her other theatrical credits include Sophisticated Ladies, Black Ballad, Carmen, Cabaret and the Off-Broadway and West End Productions of Lady Day, for which Bridgewater received the British Laurence Olivier Nomination for Best Actress in a Musical.

As a Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Bridgewater continues to appeal for international solidarity to finance global grassroots projects in the fight against world hunger. She is currently on tour worldwide in support of “Memphis,” her new CD, and in April of this year was the recipient of an NEA Jazz Masters Fellows Award with honors bestowed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.
Jean Carne is an American jazz and pop singer. In mid career, she added a final e to her name, reportedly under the advice of a numerologist. Carn is a vocalist credited with a five octave vocal range. She began her recording career with her then-husband, pianist Doug Carn, for Black Jazz Records. Carn has worked with some of the most prolific soul artists, producers and songwriters over the years, including Dizzy Gillespie, Norman Connors, The Temptations, Glenn Jones, Phyllis Hyman, Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff.

Carn attended Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, and learned to speak Russian fluently. She received a scholarship after graduating in 1965, to attend Morris Brown College where she performed every genre from musical theater to grand opera. Carn planned on furthering her studies at Juilliard School of Music in New York when she met and married jazz pianist Doug Carn (the couple later divorced) and became a featured vocalist in his jazz fusion band. The couple based themselves in Los Angeles, California, where Carn did three early albums with her husband. In 1976, Carn was signed to Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff’s Philadelphia International Records, where she released three albums.

In 2002, Carn toured the United Kingdom accompanied by her musical director, Nathan Heathman, with appearances at the London Jazz Cafe in March of that year. In 2008, she was among the Philly artists featured in the two-part PBS television special “Love Train, The Sound of Philadelphia” which celebrated the musical legacy of Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff and Philadelphia International Records.

Lewis Ronald “Ronnie” McNeir is an American singer and songwriter. McNeir was born in Camden, Alabama. As a solo artist, he recorded for the De-to, RCA, Prodigal, Motown, Capitol, Expansion and Motor City labels, recording his first song when he was seventeen. His friendship with Kim Weston, for whom he was musical director, led to his recording for RCA, then for moonlighting Motown Vice-President Barney Ales, the owner of the Prodigal label. When Ales went back to Motown, McNair became a Motown artist, recording the 1976 album “Love’s Comin’ Down”. He would later duet with Teena Marie on the song “We’ve Got To Stop Meeting Like This” from her 1984 Epic album, Starchild and serve as the musical director for The Four Tops for several years. He became an official member of the Tops in 1999 when lead singer Levi Stubbs was too ill to continue singing with the group.[1] He has been with the group ever since. He also was nominated for a Grammy in the Gospel Music category in 1981 for his collaboration with Rance Allen and in 2007, he released “Ronnie Mac & Company,” which features collaborations with Kirk Whalum, Kathy Lamar and fellow Four Top Theo Peoples. Throughout his career, Ronnie has also worked with Bobby Womack, David Ruffin, Smokey Robinson, Angela Winbush, the Whispers, Carrie Lucas and Eddie Kendricks.

George W. Faison is an American dancer, choreographer, teacher, and theater producer, and winner of a 1975 Tony, a Drama Desk Award, and a 1991 nominee for the Emmy Award for choreography. He was a featured dancer with the Alvin Alley American Dance Theater, founder of the George Faison Universal Dance Experience, and co-founder/producing artistic director of the Faison Firehouse Theater. From 1967 to 1969, Faison danced with the Alley, leaving in 1970. He danced in the original 1970 Broadway production of Purlie and founded the George Faison Universal Dance Experience in 1971. The group’s dancers included Renee Rose, Al Perryman, Gary DeLoatch and Debbie Allen. Faison’s Broadway debut as choreographer occurred in 1972 with Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope, followed by other shows, including The Wiz, where he worked with Stephanie Mills and Geoffrey Holder. He worked as a choreographer for entertainers like Ashford and Simpson, Earth, Wind and Fire, Patti Labelle and Dionne Warwick. He choreographed over two dozen musicals, including the Broadway show 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue (1967) with music by Leonard Bernstein; a Radio City Music Hall production of Porgy and Bess (1983); and Sing, Mahalia, Sing (1985). He won an Emmy Award for his choreography in the HBO special The Josephine Baker Story in 1991.
Kurt Carr is an American gospel music composer and performer. While living in the city of Hartford, Connecticut, he served as Minister of Music at The First Baptist Church of Hartford. In his early teen years, he performed as an actor and dancer at the Hartford Stage Company in a Broadway musical called On the Town, which was directed by Clay Johnson. After high school, he entered into the music program at the University of Connecticut, where he studied classical music and earned a Fine Arts degree. Carr is a member of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity.

Carr was piano accompanist for Andrae Crouch’s music ministry for one year. Carr was subsequently hired to be musical director and pianist for Rev. James Cleveland’s ministry and was employed there for seven years, until Cleveland’s death.

Eventually, Carr became director of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ Choir, where he had the opportunity to work with both gospel and secular musical artists, including Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Yolanda Adams and Kirk Franklin. In 1987 while in Los Angeles, Carr formed a six-member gospel vocal ensemble called The Kurt Carr Singers in which Anastacia and Mary Mary sung in their background choir on their album No One Else.

Carr’s music is a blend of traditional gospel composition and vocals, with elements of R&B, jazz, soul, blues, and the distinct modern harmonies and singing styles found in urban contemporary gospel. The Kurt Carr Singers under his direction and musical influence have created seven albums. Kurt Carr has won four Stellar Awards.

Derrick Starks & Today’s Generation is among the long list of artists that continue to sprout from the seemingly never-ending Detroit talent machine. The son of a Detroit pastor, Starks decided to officially birth Today’s Generation in 1991 after having grown up singing together with many of its members in church. Three years later, Starks and the choir recorded and released a self-titled independent project for a local label, Aaron Records. Soon afterward, word began to circulate throughout the industry regarding this talented musician. The door opened up, allowing Starks the opportunity to work with artists such as John P. Kee, Shirley Caesar, the late James Moore, BeBe and CeCe Winans, Walter and Edwin Hawkins, Yolanda Adams, Rance Allen, Rev. Timothy Wright, as well as former Entertainment Tonight co-host John Tesh. Starks has also had several of his songs recorded by the COGIC International Mass Choir, Ron Winans Family & Friends Choir, and Charlene Bell. What he learned while under the music tutelage of the late legendary Dr. Mattie Moss Clark afforded Starks the opportunity to travel across the country and abroad as a bandmember/music director with Vanessa Bell Armstrong, the Clark Sisters, and the Whitfield Company choir.

Santita Jackson is an American singer and political commentator from Chicago, Illinois. She is the oldest daughter of Jacqueline Lavinia Brown Jackson and civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson.

While interviewing for admission to Harvard University, Jackson was criticized by two alumni for her father’s political views. Though ultimately accepted to Harvard, she said of the school, “I didn’t feel it was the proper environment after that interview.” Jackson subsequently attended Howard University on a full merit scholarship. While at Howard University, Jackson became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Following her time at Howard, Jackson worked as an aide to Illinois congressman Gus Savage. Shortly after college, Jackson moved to New York to pursue a career in music. She spent over five years touring as a backup singer for Roberta Flack, and later performed with the Opera Ebony company. In 1996, Jackson was asked by the family of Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown to perform at his funeral alongside Wynton Marsalis and the Howard University Chorale. The following year, Jackson performed the National Anthem at Bill Clinton’s second Presidential Inauguration.

In 2009, Jackson released her first recording project, “Put Your Arms Around the World,” a collaboration with songwriter Janice Kapp Perry, vocalist Chris Willis, and Utah Senator Orrin Hatch. In April 2012, Jackson began working as a political commentator on the Fox News Channel. She also hosts her own television show on The Word Network. She is the writer, co-host, and executive producer of the nationally syndicated radio show “Keep Hope Alive with Rev. Jesse Jackson.” is a founding contributor at The Grio, an MSNBC website dedicated to African American news and opinion.
Tasha Page-Lockhart is an American Christian R&B and urban contemporary gospel artist and musician.

Born in Detroit, her stepfather is Bishop Michael Alan Brooks of the group Commissioned and her mother is Pastor Lisa Charise Page Brooks of the group Witness. Her music career started by becoming a part of her mother's women's gospel group. Solo career started in 2013 with the Sunday Best reality gospel singing competition on BET. She won the show in season six, which granted her a recording contract with RCA Records label, Fo Yo Soul Recordings, which Kirk Franklin is the operator. This allowed her to introduce her first solo studio album, Here Right Now, on August 5, 2014. Page-Lockhart won the gospel singing competition, Sunday Best, that airs on BET, during season six. The album charted on two Billboard charts; The Billboard 200 and the Top Gospel Albums.

Tyler Perry is an American actor, playwright, and filmmaker. In 2011, Forbes listed him as the highest paid man in entertainment, earning $130 million USD between May 2010 and 2011. Perry created and performs the Madea character, a tough elderly black woman. Perry's films vary in style from orthodox filmmaking techniques to filmed productions of live stage plays. Perry is estimated to have earned around US$75 million by 2008. Many of Perry's stage-play films have been subsequently adapted as films.

As a child, Perry once went so far as to attempt suicide in an effort to escape his father’s beatings. In contrast to his father, his mother took him to church each week, where he sensed a certain refuge and contentment. At age 16, he had his first name legally changed from Emmitt to Tyler in an effort to distance himself from his father.

In his early 20s, watching an episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show, he heard someone describe the sometimes therapeutic effect the act of writing can have, enabling the author to work out his or her own problems. This comment inspired him to apply himself to a career in writing. He soon started writing a series of letters to himself, which became the basis for the musical I Know I've Been Changed.

Lisa McCall is a master teacher, choreographer, producer and educator, and is the CEO of LM Productions Entertainment. Lisa is the rehearsal director and touring road manager for the dancers and choreographers of the Aretha Franklin Group. Appearances at The White House, Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall, Kodak Hollywood Theatre, Nokia Theater Los Angeles 2012, Essence Festival 2012. Lisa has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer for the past two decades in NYC for many on and off Broadway musicals, television and film.

She is an alumna of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. She has taught dance as an adjunct faculty member at both Wayne State University and Oakland University. She has taught abroad at the University of Trinidad and the University of West Indies, just recently in Grenada. Lisa is also currently the head of the Dance and Theatre Department at Consortium Preparatory High School in Detroit and has held the post for nine years.
Jenifer Lewis is an American actress, comedian, singer and activist. She moved from Kinloch, Missouri to New York to begin her career, appearing in Broadway musicals. She landed the role of Effie White in Michael Bennett-directed musical Dreamgirls. She worked as a back-up singer for Bette Midler before appearing in films Beaches (1988) and Sister Act (1992).


On television, Lewis starred as Lana Hawkins in the Lifetime medical drama Strong Medicine from 2000 to 2006. She also had the recurring roles on sitcoms A Different World, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air and Girlfriends. In 2014, Lewis began starring as Ruby Johnson in the ABC comedy series, Black-ish, for which she received two Critics’ Choice Television Award nominations.

In a professional band, the Musical Director, or M.D., Kern Brantley guides the group from the first audition to the last gig. The M.D. must know how to put together a band that is right for the music, as well as how to rehearse that band and get a high-quality show together. Top M.D.s are never lacking for work and those who are great stay in high demand by top artists who will settle for nothing less than the best. Enter Detroit native Kern Brantley.

A mere glance at Kern’s credits reveal an individual whose talent and reputation for excellence earns numerous placements on major projects. Through his experience Kern has become a very accomplished Musician, Producer, Songwriter and Arranger.

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan; a city that is synonymous with music heavyweights, Kern gleaned his style listening to the celebrated Motown artists of the 60’s and 70’s. There is no doubt that being raised in Detroit during this period was electrifying and influenced his style a great deal. The standards were set very high. Kern epitomizes this awareness.

He has performed in over 2,000 live shows, served as musical director for most of his 20+ concert tours with artists such as Lady Gaga, Beyonce, Mary J Blige, Ne-Yo, Chris Brown, Destiny’s Child and many more. He’s had 50+ television appearances including the Grammy’s, Oscar’s, The Tonight Show, Late Night with David Letterman, Ellen Show, Oprah, Saturday Night Live and more. He has 100+ recording credits including Puff Daddy, Will Smith, LL Cool J, 98 Degrees, The Winans and Aretha Franklin’s One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.

Among a handful of the most innovative, original and influential artists of our time, Narada Michael Walden’s stature as an authentic musical renaissance man is a matter of record.

As impressive a production and songwriting resume as Narada Michael Walden has assembled over the past thirty years and counting, he has earned equal acclaim as a recording and performing artist in his own right. Beginning as a drummer first with the pioneering Mahavishnu Orchestra following Bill Cobham at 21 years old.

Through eleven acclaimed solo recordings, along the way he has branched into a wide range of sonic arenas. Producing Hits for Artists as diverse as Aretha Franklin (including the platinum “Freeway of Love”), Steve Winwood, Ray Charles, Wynonna Judd, Whitney Houston, George Michael, Mariah Carey, Barbara Streisand, Lionel Ritchie, Lisa Fischer, Stevie Wonder, Tom Jones, Jeff Beck and The Temptations, the EMMY and multi-GRAMMY winner (Producer, Album and Song of The Year) has been at the helm of hit music that spans decades. His music flows freely from pop, rock and soul, to the rarified realms of jazz, fusion and world music. Walden was an integral part of introducing Whitney Houston, (producing 6 of her 7 number one hits to break Michael Jackson’s record) and Mega-star Mariah Carey to millions of fans worldwide, producing and writing their breakthrough hits that first brought these divas to the spotlight. Billboard Magazine honored him as one of the Top Ten Producers of all time.

His work is featured in such blockbuster films as The Bodyguard, Free Willy, Beverly Hills Cops II, 9½ Weeks and Stuart Little to the EMMY-winning “One Moment In Time,” the theme to the 1988 Olympic Games.
PARTICIPANTS

Dave McMurray  
Musical Artist

Dave McMurray is a long time Detroit-based Jazz musician and saxophonist, a member of the group Was (Not Was), and international fixture on the worldwide music scene. Best known as a tenor saxophonist, McMurray is actually a multi-instrumentalist who is proficient on a number of instruments including flute, keyboards, alto and soprano saxophones and many more. He’s talented in many genres such as Jazz, Rock, World, Avant-garde, Funk, and more. He’s played with from the French pop star, Johnny Hallyday, to Bob Dylan, Gladys Knight, Was Not Was, Bonnie Raitt, Iggy Pop, KEM, and the Rolling Stones. His Jazz work has also been diverse working with avant-garde Griot Galaxy, and contemporary Jazz artists Geri Allen and A. Spencer Barefield, as well as Nancy Wilson, Bob James and others.

Angela Davis  
R&B, Soul Artist

Angela Davis is an accomplished Detroit-based R&B/Soul artist with exceptional vocal skills and stage presence. She began singing with the Renaissance High School Varsity Choir in Detroit where she earned numerous awards, toured across the country and was first recorded. Soon afterwards, she began writing and arranging her own songs. She spent four years at the prestigious University of Michigan where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Education and performed on music and theatrical stages. After college, Angela hit the stage performing in an effort to build a first rate reputation as a singer and brand herself. Angela has performed at some of the most popular music venues in Detroit - including Baker’s Keyboard Lounge, The Jazz Club, The Music Hall Jazz Cafe, Bert’s Motown Lounge, Ignite at the MGM Grand Casino, Campus Martius Park, and Chene Park. Angela has sung alongside some great vocalists like Alexander O’Neal, Cherielle, Penny Wells, Misty Love, Howard Hewitt, and SoulSinger J Tait. She has performed with noted musicians like Detroit Hall of Fame saxophonist, Duane Parham, and legendary Detroit keyboardist, Al McKenzie. Her debut album, “Flying High”, was released in 2012.

Kimmie Horne  
Jazz Vocalist, Model and Actress

Kimmie Horne is an International Jazz Vocalist, model, and actress. She is a native Detroiter, descendant of the legendary songstress and actor Lena Horne, and niece of the late great singer/songwriter Cleveland Horne of the “Fantastic Four.” Kimmie has left her mark in areas around the world, including, Detroit, Chicago, Las Vegas, Atlantic City, LA, San Francisco, Jamaica, Ontario, Toronto, Puerto Rico, London, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and more. In addition to live performances, Kimmie tours her “High Standards,” “Loving This Jazz,” and “Live in Las Vegas” CD’s.


As a representative for Budweiser, luxury furriers, and celebrity spokesperson and model for Lincoln Automotive Group/Varsity Lincoln, Kimmie’s talent transcends beyond impeccable vocals alone. She launched her self-titled “Kimmie Horne Jazz Festival,” in 2016, that is preparing to expand nationally and internationally. New partnerships, new music and video releases, as well as summer tours, including the annual trip to Japan, are just a few of the things on tap for Kimmie Horne in 2018.
Gwen Foxx consolidates R&B, Jazz and Classical standards. An exhilarating song stylist, and captivating actor, she is one of the hottest talents in the entertainment industry. As a featured vocalist, she has performed at the “Gospel Mega Fest” with T.D. Jakes in Atlanta, with KEM, at the Blue Note Lounge with Chaka Khan, in Aretha Franklin’s Annual Christmas Celebration, the “Essence Music Festival” with Luther Vandross. She was the vocal director and background singer for Mary J. Blige’s “Share My World” tour. Opening concerts for Will Downing, Brian McKnight, Bob Baldwin, Tom Brown, and countless others over the span of her blessed and exciting career, Foxx theatrical credits include: acting and singing in Michael Mathew’s production of “Mama Don’t”, with Jennifer Holiday and the Clark Sisters; David Payton’s “A Good Man is Hard To Find”, Angela Barrow’s “Why Do Good Girls Like Bad Boys”, Barrow’s production of “Real Men Pray”, and Langston Hughes’ “Black Nativity” with Stephanie Mills and produced by the Grammy Award winner, George Faison. The powerful, sultry and sophisticated voice of female vocalist Ms. GWEN FOXX delivers an undeniable sound of smoothness that is all her own, and leaves you to believe she is one of Motown’s rarest jewels.

Beth Griffith-Manley is the daughter of Johnny Griffith, the legendary and Multi-Grammy® Award-winning pianist/keyboardist, and original member of the Funk Brothers. In 2006, Beth was tabbed to perform an inspiring and timeless duet, “Reach Out Everyone,” alongside the late Ali “Ollie” Woodson of the Temptations. She provided background vocals for Grammy® Award-winning gospel singer Yolanda Adams’ Christmas album and was featured on Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame Dave Mason’s project, “How Do I Get to Heaven.” She then had the opportunity to tour with 8-time Grammy® Award-winning songstress, Anita Baker as a background vocalist for five years. She began touring with 3-time Grammy® Award-nominated, Motown Recording Artist, KEM in 2013, providing background vocals as well as performing duets and featured solos around the world. Beth holds a product endorsement from Lewitt Audio and performed on their sponsored stage at the 2014 N.A.M.M (National Association of Music Merchants) Music Conference. Beth has also had the privilege of having performed at the Michigan Inaugural Balls held in Washington D.C. for President Barack Obama’s 1st and 2nd terms, as well as for President Bill Clinton and Donald Trump.

In addition to her roles as a vocalist, Beth is a member of SAG-AFTRA and has held several stage and screen acting roles. Her most memorable moment on stage was being cast in the 2011 remake of the movie, “Sparkle” as the stand-in and body-double for Whitney Houston, during filming in Detroit in 2011. Beth was a principle vocalist on “Dancing With The Stars, Season 22 – Icons Night,” and has also provided her voice to the television shows: “Ash vs. Evil Dead” on the Starz Network, “Glee Project” on the OWN Network and “American Bible Challenge” on the Game Show Network (GSN).

She released her debut single and debut album “Free” in August 2017. Beth continues to tour worldwide as a solo artist and as a support vocalist with KEM.

Kiko has toured with K’Jon and opened for Charlie Wilson and Mike Epps at The Fox Theatre. Kiko was nominated for the Detroit Black Music Award “Female R&B Vocalist of the Year” for 2013. Kiko has performed at iconic venues like Baker’s Keyboard Lounge, Cliff Bells, The Music Hall, and The Fillmore Theatre. Kiko is the lead singer for the Larry Lee and the Back in the Day Band”. She has opened for Recording Artist Charlie Wilson. Kiko has also had roles in the stage plays like ‘My Brother Marvin” -- about the life of Marvin Gaye -- and in the play “Perilous Times.”
Flint-born singer Cherri Black is a premiere vocalist who has an unmatched track record of performances. Black is one of Katy Perry’s touring backup singers -- having performed on “The Prismatic World Tour” and “Witness: The Tour.” Black started singing in elementary school, in choir and talent shows. She was “too shy” to sing in church, but listened to Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Destiny’s Child and Beyonce. She began recording herself and going over the tapes to improve. Black moved to the Detroit area more than a decade ago to forward her singing career, working with other musicians including the popular Simone Vitale Band. Her skills got her studio work, and led to the Perry job while working with music director Kristopher Pooley, and his production partner, Ben West. There she worked on material they wrote for TV, including “Glee” and “The Glee Project.”

She released an album, “Stop Drop Roll,” in 2006 and she continues to write and record her own material.

Steffanie Christi’an is a rock maven with magnificent presence. A native of Detroit, Michigan, Steffanie is a natural born singer who was blessed to begin performing at local events around the city while she was a young child. At age nine, Steffanie secured her first professional gig as a paid performer at boxing legend, Tommy Hearns’ birthday party. Her Detroit roots have cultivated her music; giving birth to collaborations with local legends like, Big Proof from D12 and J Dilla’s original producing partner, Amp Fiddler.

Steffanie was 18 years old when she explored the concrete jungle of New York City. After signing to Famous Music Publishing, she spent a few years writing with some of the industry’s top songwriters and producers. She returned home to Detroit and immediately reconnected with fellow artists who were close to her heart, including Big Proof.

Steffanie has performed at hundreds of events. A popular staple in poet, jessica care moore’s Black Women Rock collaborative, she is also the former front woman of the rock band, FluxPhonic. As a solo performer, she has toured with regional funk and soul bands and has opened for a diverse range of acclaimed artists including Tom Morello, Thousand Foot Krutch, Erykah Badu and Talib Kweli. Her highly anticipated debut album, Way Too Much was released in 2014. In 2015, Steffanie toured nationwide with Talib Kwelli and internationally with the Sisters, Songwriters and Sirens tour created by the Black Rock Coalition. She toured with seminal acts such as Taylor Mac and worked on her second album, It’s Complicated. Featured in Mac’s A 24-Decade History of Popular Music. Steffanie’s recent sold out tribute concert to rock icon Tina Turner, Nice and Rough: A Night with Steffanie and Tina was a dynamic display of her bold artistry.

Detroit born and raised Anesha Birchett is part of the singer/songwriter duo APLUS. Being products of a city known for its grit, fight and brute, she and her sister Antea know what it means to “go hard or go home”. Their resume demonstrates over a decade of penned and placed songs with the likes of celebrated industry notables including Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez, Justin Bieber, Teyana Taylor, Ciara, Mary J. Blige and many more. These placements have earned APLUS tremendous respect for their talent and skills.

Signing to Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins as songwriters in 2005, and then Universal Music Publishing Group in 2009, brought many lessons and successes. These 12 years as signed songwriters prompted them to get out of the studio and onto the stage; telling their stories only the way Top 40 music industry songwriters can. Having signed a record deal with Detroit based Original 1265 Recordings, they released their first album in the summer of 2017. From acoustic pop ballads of life, love and perseverance to smooth, soulful stories of heartbreak and betrayal, Aplus will take you on a lyrical and melodic journey of Pride, of Liberty, of Detroit.
Judge Greg Mathis is the youngest elected judge in Michigan’s history. A native of Detroit, Mathis’s troubled upbringing and membership in the Errol Flynn’s gang is documented in his 2002 autobiography Inner City Miracle. Mathis earned his G.E.D. in 1977, received his B.S. degree in public administration from Eastern Michigan University in 1982 and his J.D. degree from the University of Detroit Law School in 1987. He immersed himself in politics and led a student-run movement to protest South African apartheid. Following graduation, Mathis established himself as an ardent civil rights activist, worked on Reverend Jesse Jackson’s Operation PUSH and his presidential campaign in 1984, and received an appointment to the staff of Detroit councilman Clyde Cleveland in 1983. In 1986, Mathis, his wife Linda, and some friends formed Young Adults Asserting Themselves (YAAT) and four preschools in Detroit. Mathis also spent seven years (1986-1993) working for Detroit mayor Coleman A. Young as manager of the Detroit City Halls.

In 1995, Mathis was elected to Michigan’s 36th District Court. His efforts in that arena prompted Warner Brothers Entertainment to offer him his own eponymous courtroom reality series, The Judge Mathis Show, which began on a syndicated basis in 1999. Mathis has appeared as a guest on dozens of talk programs including The Tonight Show, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, and Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher.

Mathis has been the recipient of many awards and honors. A chairman of Rainbow/PUSH-Excel board, a lifetime member of the NAACP, and a member the Southern Christian Leadership Conference board, Mathis and his wife and college sweetheart, Linda, have raised four children. He also remained fully active in civil rights, social causes, and charities.

JoAnn Watson is currently an on-air personality for 910 AM Superstation/WFDF and Comcast Channel 91 WHPR as the host of Wake Up Detroit. Watson also appears as an on-air television personality for The Word Network as the host of Wake Up World.

Watson received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Michigan, who has recognized her as a “Distinguished Alumnus”. In 1996, the University of Michigan also awarded Watson the “Leonard F. Sain Esteemed Alumni Award”. Watson also was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humanities.

Watson began her career in public service as the executive director of the Downtown Detroit YWCA. She would eventually rise to the position of assistant executive director of the National YWCA. From 1987 to 1990, she worked the New York headquarters, where her responsibilities included directing the Office of Racial Justice. Watson would go on to serve as the executive director of the Detroit NAACP, the nation’s largest NAACP branch. Watson is the only woman to ever serve in this role.

On April 29, 2003, Watson won the Special Election called to fill a vacancy on the Detroit City Council, which was created when Councilwoman Brenda Scott died, defeating the highly-favored Gil Hill. Watson would subsequently win re-election to City Council and served as City Council President Pro Tem. In 2013, Watson announced her intention to retire. Watson is an associate professor at Wayne County Community College. Watson also serves as the Associate Pastor of West Side Unity Church and is a faculty member at the Unity Urban Ministerial School.

Born and raised in Mount Clemens, Mich., Erica Peeples first discovered her passion for acting as child. She was apart of a youth theater group called Mosaic Youth Theatre, and she was the first from her small town to be accepted to The Juilliard School. After graduating from Juilliard, Erica went on to star in several famous off Broadway productions such as Joe Turners Come and Gone, A Raisin in The Sun and Piano Lesson. She has had several small roles on television series such as Law and Order Criminal intent and Law and Order CSI. She recently landed a lead role in the feature film True To The Game, alongside Columbus Short, Vivica Fox and Nelson Ellis.
Keith Washington from Detroit, Michigan is best known for his 1991 hit single “Kissing You”. The song was also used as Background music for an episode on the ABC television soap opera General Hospital.[1] “Kissing You” was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best R&B Vocal Performance Male and won a 1992 Soul Train Music Award for Best R&B/Soul Single – Male. The song also topped the Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart for one week.

Washington’s discography includes three albums between 1991 - 1998, all of which charted on the U.S. and U.S. R&B charts. 10 singles reached the U.S. Hot 100 and U.S. R&B charts. He also recorded a duet with Kylie Minogue, their co-composition “If You Were with Me Now” in 1991 which reached number 4 in the UK Singles Chart.

Washington branched out in a few acting roles. He starred as himself on the series Martin in an episode, singing a duet with Tisha Campbell-Martin. In addition, Keith had a brief role in the TV soap opera General Hospital as Keith Jasper. He also had a brief role in John Singleton’s Poetic Justice, starring Janet Jackson.

He revealed his plans to release a new album. Washington has since branched out into radio himself, as he now hosts the nighttime “Slow Jams” show “Kisses After Dark” on Detroit radio station WD-MK-FM 105.9 (Kiss-FM).

Angie Stone rose to fame in the late 1970s as founding member of the hip hop trio The Sequence. They were the second rap group signed to the Sugar Hill Records. Soon after, Stone began working with futuristic rap group Mantronix and later sang background for singer Lenny Kravitz. In the early 1990s, she became a member of the R&B trio Vertical Hold, which released two albums in 1993 and 1995.

Stone shared songwriting credits on D’Angelo’s first two studio albums, Brown Sugar (1995) and Voodoo (2000), as well as provided backing vocals when on tour with him. In 1999, Stone released her solo debut album Black Diamond on Arista Records, which was certified gold and spawned the R&B single “No More Rain (In This Cloud)”. After the transition to J Records, she released another gold selling album, 2001’s Mahogany Soul, which included “Wish I Didn’t Miss You”, Stone’s most successful single.

She has since released five albums: Stone Love (2004), The Art of Love & War (2007), Unexpected (2010), Rich Girl (2012), and Dream (2015). Stone has appeared on television shows such as VH1’s Celebrity Fit Club and TV One’s R&B Divas, and starred in movies such as The Fighting Temptations along with Cuba Gooding, Jr., Beyonce and Mike Epps, as well as Pastor Brown, School Gyrls and TVOne’s R&B Divas. She has also starred in plays and stage productions.

Stone has been nominated for three Grammy Awards. She has been most successful on the R&B charts, with four top 10 albums, including a number one, and 10 singles, including a top 10.

Stone sings the theme song for the UPN/The CW’s sitcom Girlfriends. In addition to Mary J. Blige, Stone has worked as a songwriter with many other artists. She also played saxophone on the Lenny Kravitz Let Love Rule tour.
Saginaw-born **L.J. Reynolds** is best known as the lead singer of the group The Dramatics, a role he’s held for more than three decades. L.J. first started recording when he was about nine or ten years old. He took tap dance lessons and was the only boy in a class of 30+ girls. At one dance performance, he sang a solo, and people in the audience started throwing money onstage.

L.J. became a solo recording artist at a very young age, and when he became a teen, he joined a group called Chocolate Syrup. In 1972, he left Chocolate Syrup, and was planning to record as a solo artist again. But he met Ron Banks backstage at the Apollo Theatre. L.J. became the newest member of the legendary singing group The Dramatics one year later, after William Howard had left the fold. The tenor/baritone has a wide vocal range, produces, and plays several instruments, including the drums, guitar, and keyboards. He has written several songs for the Dramatics and for himself, such as “Stop Your Weeping”, “Stand Up and Move”, “Key To the World”, “Lovin’ Man”, “Be With the One You Love”, “Tell Me You Will”, “Everything Is You”, and the brilliant “Got My Pride” from the recent “Look Inside” album, on which he plays the keyboards.

L.J. left The Dramatics in 1981 for a solo career. He had some solo success, the biggest being the wonderful mid-tempo hit “Key to the World,” before returning to the Dramatics in the mid-80s. He has remained in the group ever since, occasionally also releasing solo albums.

**Raheem DeVaughn** expressed an affinity for music in preschool. He is a cousin of singer Chrissy Michele.

DeVaughn had an epiphany early in his college career at Coppin State University, when he saw a group of street corner singers and began harmonizing with them. His focus turned to becoming a professional singer. He began working the D.C. music circuit—performing with various groups and at various venues. He signed a recording contract with Jive Records in 2002.

His debut album, The Love Experience (2005), reached No. 46 on the US Billboard 200 album chart, selling around 250,000 units. It featured the singles “Guess Who Loves You More” and “You”. His second album Love Behind the Melody was released in January 2008. It features the singles “Woman”, and “Customer”.

DeVaughn was nominated for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance at the 2008 Grammy Awards for the single “Woman”, which received a nomination for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance for the 2008 Grammy Awards. DeVaughn was nominated for “Best R&B Album” in the 2011 Grammy Awards. In 2013, DeVaughn released his fourth studio album A Place Called Love Land. In 2015, he had released his fifth album, Love Sex Passion.
Johnny Gill is best known as a successful solo recording artist and as lead singer of platinum-selling boy band New Edition. Born in Washington, D.C., Gill began his career singing gospel in his father’s church, as part of the family gospel group, Wings of Faith. Even at a young age, Gill stood out because of his mature voice, sounding wise beyond his years.

A childhood friend, singer Stacy Lattisaw, helped Gill to record a demo, which got him a record deal in 1983, at age 16. His first self-titled album garnered some attention, but he really began to get national attention when he next made a duo album with Lattisaw. Their hit single, “Perfect Combination,” brought a new level of awareness to the young singers.

In 1987, Gill went on to become a lead singer of the popular boy band New Edition. Gill’s deep, distinctive voice helped the group forge a more mature sound. The group’s 1987 album, Heart Break, included the hit singles “Can You Stand the Rain” (which went to No. 1 on the R&B charts), “N.E. Heartbreak” and “Boys to Men.”

Signing with Motown Records as a solo artist, Gill reached his full potential when his second self-titled album was released in 1990. It was produced by the top two R&B producing duos of that time: L.A. Reid and Babyface, and Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. The album reached No. 1 on Billboard’s Top 100 R&B Albums (and the Top 10 on the Pop Albums chart). Gill had four hits: “My, My, My,” “Wrap My Body Tight”; “Fairweather Friend” and “Rub You the Right Way.”

He continued making hits, at one point joining superstar singers Keith Sweat and the late Gerald Levert to form the R&B supergroup LSG.

Regina Belle first started her career in the mid-1980s. Known for her singles, “Baby Come to Me” (1989) and “Make It Like It Was” (1990), Belle’s most notable for hit duets with Peabo Bryson. The theme song “Far Longer than Forever” from the animated movie The Swan Princess, performed with Jeffrey Osborne was nominated for a Golden Globe in 1995 for Best Original Song.

She sang her first solo in church at age 8. She studied opera at the Manhattan School of Music. At Rutgers University, she became the first female vocalist with the school’s jazz ensemble. She was introduced to the Manhattans by New York radio DJ Vaughn Harper and began working as their opening act. She recorded the duet “Where Did We Go Wrong” with the group which helped to attract the attention of Columbia Records. They eventually signed her to a record deal.

In 1987, she released her debut album All by Myself. It includes her first hits “So Many Tears” and “Show Me the Way”. In the same year, Belle recorded her first successful duet with Peabo Bryson: the song “Without You”, the love theme from the comedy film Leonard Part 6, also released in 1987. The song was her first single to appear on the Adult Contemporary (chart), peaking at #8 and was also her first single to appear in four charts. Her follow-up album, Stay with Me, released in 1989. Belle recorded a duet in 1991 with Johnny Mathis, “Better Together” which appeared on his album.


Belle has appeared in concert with many other performers, including Ray Charles, Boney James, Paul Taylor, The Rippingtons, Gerald Albright, Will Downing, Maze, Frankie Beverly, Phil Perry, Al Jarreau, and Stephanie Mills.
The Four Tops from Detroit helped to define the Motown sound of the 1960s. The group's repertoire has included soul music, R&B, disco, adult contemporary, doo-wop, jazz, and show tunes. They began their careers together while they were high school students in Detroit. Founded as the Four Aims, lead singer Levi Stubbs, Abdul “Duke” Fakir, Renaldo “Obie” Benson and Lawrence Payton signed to Chess Records in 1956, changing their names to The Four Tops. In 1963 Berry Gordy, Jr. convinced the Tops to join the roster of his growing Motown record company.

The group was the main male vocal group for the highly successful songwriting and production team of Holland–Dozier–Holland, who crafted a stream of hit singles for Motown. These included two Billboard Hot 100 number-one hits for the Tops: “I Can’t Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch)” in 1965, their first number 1 hit, and “Reach Out I’ll Be There” in 1966. Other Top 10 hits included “It’s the Same Old Song”, “Standing in the Shadows of Love” and “Bernadette”. Holland-Dozier-Holland wrote most of Levi Stubbs’s vocals near the top of his range, in order to get a sense of strained urgency in his gospel preacher-inspired leads.

The Four Tops were among a number of groups who established the Motown Sound heard around the world during the 1960s. After Holland-Dozier-Holland left Motown in 1967, the Four Tops were assigned to a number of producers, including Ivy Hunter, Nickolas Ashford & Valerie Simpson, Norman Whitfield and Johnny Bristol, without significant chart success.

When Motown left Detroit in 1972 to move to Los Angeles, California, the Tops stayed in Detroit but signed a new recording deal with ABC Records’ Dunhill imprint. They continued to have chart singles into the late 1970s, including the million-seller “Ain’t No Woman”.

In the 1980s, the Four Tops recorded for Casablanca Records, Arista Records and Motown, returning to that label on two occasions for brief stays. They were featured on the company’s television special Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever, taking part in one of the highlights of the show – a battle-of-the-bands between The Tops and The Temptations. After completing their European tour, a prolonged recording session and a performance at the television show Top of the Pops in December 1988 caused them to oversleep and miss the ill-fated Pan Am Flight 103 which crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland.

In addition to their own recordings, the Four Tops also worked in the fields of television and motion pictures. The group as a whole performed a song for the 1982 film Grease 2, and Levi Stubbs provided the vocals for the man-eating plant Audrey II in the 1986 musical film, Little Shop of Horrors; and the voice of the evil Mother Brain on the Nintendo-based NBC Saturday morning cartoon Captain N: The Game Master from 1989 to 1991.

The Tops remained together for over four decades, performing from 1953 until 1997, when a change of lineup was forced on the group when Lawrence Payton died on June 20 of that year. Theo Peoples (formerly of the Temptations) was recruited as the new fourth member. Peoples eventually took over the role of lead singer when Stubbs suffered a stroke in 2000, with Ronnie McNeir then joining the group. On July 1, 2005, Benson died of lung cancer. Payton’s son Roquel Payton replaced him. Levi Stubbs died on October 17, 2008.

Fakir, McNeir, Roquel Payton, and Harold “Spike” Bonhart, who replaced Peoples in 2011, are still performing together as the Four Tops. Fakir is the only surviving founding member of the group.
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and the fans who helped make this event truly special.

Long Live Our Queen...
SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS INCLUDING:

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Isiah Thomas
Judge Greg Mathis
Vivian Pickard
A Celebration Fit For The Queen

ARETHA

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