



ENTERTAINMENT



The unseen and heard keys of black music in America

By Amia Edwards
Jackson Advocate Guest Writer

Did you know that June is African American Music Appreciation Month? It can be argued that, in every genre of music, you will be able to find the talented and perhaps unseen hands of a black artist. In 1979, President Carter officially reserved June as Black Music History Month, a time to commemorate the African American musical influence that is a critical part of our diverse arts and cultural heritage. In 2016, President Obama released a proclamation renaming June as African American Music Appreciation Month. "Songs by African American musicians span the breadth of the human experience and resonate in every corner of our Nation – animating our bodies, stimulating our imaginations, and nourishing our souls."

Very few fans of music may know that June is a month to celebrate African American Music. It may be said that may be because music in all its forms is celebrated daily. For most modern Americans today, a buffet of various popular music is served alongside most celebrations. Can you imagine American Black Culture without music? Can you picture a world with no heart racing drumline at the SWAC half-time show? Hosting a family cookout with no Frankie Beverly and Maze or Earth, Wind, and Fire serenading in the background? That may leave a bad taste in a lot of mouths – no matter how tasty the potato salad is.

Music is a vital part of the black community and history. While wrapped in shackles and chains, slaves were able to reach and unlock musical keys to offer solace and encouragement. Music continued to be a shared language in the days of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and even today during the tinder box of the Black Lives Matter Movement. In Beyoncé's and Kendrick Lamar's hit, "Freedom", the rap artist addresses the frustrations of the community;

"10 hail marys, I meditate for practice. Channel 9 news tell me I'm moving backwards. 8 blocks left, death is around the corner. 7 misleadin statements 'bout my persona. 6 headlights wavin' in my direction. 5-0 asking me what's in my possession. Yeah I keep runnin, jump in the aqueducts. Fire hydrants and hazardous. Smoke alarms on the back of us."

Conversely, during complex times, many allow the rich bellows of Gospel music to soothe heartache. Offering inspiration, Gospel music and the Black Church are where many urban musicians take seed and grow. "To understand the history of

Black Gospel Music is to understand the journey, struggle, triumph, faith, and resilience of a people. Our music reflects our soul." Minister of Music, musician, and radio personality Chandra Wise says this month is the time to rightfully acknowledge those musicians whose groundbreaking contributions have been overlooked.

Grammy Award-winning Ron Carbo, who has an extensive resume of working with artists of several genres, appreciates African American Music Month and holds a unique view of celebrating. "I don't really celebrate this month due to the already overwhelming global acceptance of black music daily. However, it does present an opportunity to educate and expose our young listeners to some of the world's most prolific, artistic, and creative black artists of different eras, genres, and cultures."

Ask both of these established musicians to name their favorite black artist and you will not get a "solo" artist. Instead, they both offer a lengthy list of talent and genres worth exploring, such as Wynton Marsalis, Leontyne Price, Kirk Franklin, John P. Kee, Bobby Rush, and Curtis Mayfield, just to name a few.

Carbo says black music is too rich to narrow down. "It's virtually impossible for me to have one favorite black musician. Due to the fact that I've been a large connoisseur of black music and have worked with many of these artists over my nearly 40 year career, it's really tough."

In a world of quick, barely paying online streaming and COVID-19 restrictions, how does one celebrate African American Music Month and preserve its numerous forms? Wise says, "I would love for people to learn how much public support means to artists, especially independent artists. Many artists have felt the impact of COVID-19 by not being able to tour and perform. However, we are still able to support by streaming and buying merchandise."

Carbo wants the black music community as a whole to be careful with their talents and gifts. "Artists must remember that they have a voice that can positively change a community or create a destructive mindset for future generations. Black music and culture are some of the most influential products and exports America has globally. We, as a community, must educate ourselves about our rich and diverse history of black music and not limit ourselves to one or two artists or genres. Black music embraces our struggle and triumphs as a people; it's our story, and it's who we are."

Hoping changes will be made

By Bobby Rush
Jackson Advocate Guest Writer

My name is Bobby Rush. I'm a blues singer for over 65 years. I'm so sad to see all of what's going in the world today. It has happened before, but this time it's different. The coronavirus, the knee on the neck of George Floyd, and so many other things happening to black people overall. It reminds me of myself as a black man...how the foot or a knee has been on my neck all of my life, one way or another. It's mostly been blocking the opportunities: to advance myself, to get a job to take care of my family, to play music in places that white bands played in. If I did get to play there, it was for less money, sometimes no money at all. It was because I was a black man playing

the blues. When a white band plays the blues, the same music he or she sings gets more money than black bands.

At first, I was hesitant making a statement about how I feel about all of this going on right now. I'm so sad about a few bad police officers, how they control and treat you when you're black. That doesn't mean all police are bad. Just a few bad apples make it seem like all police are bad, when it's not so. I'm so glad to see people are marching peacefully about Black Lives Matter, not only Black Lives Matter, but the men and women who want



Bobby Rush

to see a change in the laws to protect the rights of all people regardless of the race, creed, color of their skin, in this case especially, black lives matter. After all this marching is over, I hope some changes will be made.

I remember Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s. I remember when MLK Jr. was shot down in Memphis; my hope was shot down also. For many years now, my hope has been a shadow. It seems like the more things change, the more it remains the same. But now, I have hope again. The death of George Floyd has given me a fighting hope that we will do something about it. We must be united as all for one, and one for all.

To the Floyd family: I'm

praying for your strength and that you be strong. Things like this bring out the fight in all of us. All over the world, people's lives are being touched in some way. That's why people are marching peacefully – black, white, brown, yellow, tan – all walks of life, especially the young people. They really give me hope. A man or woman can live a long time without water or food, but they can't live long without hope. As bad as things are right now, I have hope.

So let's keep hope alive, the faith, on a local level and a national level. We must vote in what you need in, vote out what you need out. So I'll do all I can do, while I can do, so when there comes a time I cannot do, I won't regret what I did not do.

New Stage Theatre to host virtual summer camp

JANS – New Stage Theatre's More Than A Building Virtual Summer Camp will be three weeks from June 29 – July 18, Monday through Thursday each week from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Start times for each track will vary and sessions will not exceed 90 minutes of instructional time. The cost for the

camp will be \$375.

Each online session will focus on a different area of expertise and culminate in a student showcase at the conclusion of camp. Six theatre tracks will be offered and participants will select three for the duration of camp. Programs are specifically de-

signed for students at all skill levels. Students will interact and create with their teaching artists and fellow camp participants, and will choose from the following tracks: Musical Theatre, Acting, Camera Close-Up, Theatre Production, Dance, and Making Theatre. Participation in camp re-

quires an internet connection and device capable of video conferencing through Zoom. Each session will be limited to 20 participants per track.

To register or for more information, email education@newstagetheatre.com, visit <http://newstagetheatre.com> or call 601-948-3533.

Hinds County Human Resource Agency Project Head Start is currently accepting applications for the 2020-2021 school year.

Priority is given to children with diagnosed disabilities (certified IEP or IFSP)

To Qualify:

- Child must be 3 or 4 on or before September 1st
- Family must reside in Hinds County
- Must be a low-income family (based on the federal poverty level)

****Families of children with disabilities are encouraged to apply regardless of income.**

****Priority is given to children with diagnosed disabilities (certified IEP or IFSP)**

Head Start Offers the Following Services:

- Preschool Education
- Medical
- Dental
- Nutrition
- Mental Health
- Disability
- Literacy
- Leadership Development
- Limited Transportation

...ALL AT NO COST TO PARENTS!

To Apply, You Must Present the Following:

- 1) Proof of child's age** - birth certificate, hospital birth record, or passport
- 2) Proof of family's income** - tax return, W-2, pay stub, SSI, Social Security, child support, TANF, grants/scholarship, unemployment, and any other source of household income
- 3) Proof of Hinds County residency** - lease, mortgage statement, current utility bill (light, water, gas or sewer), current phone or cable bill
- 4) Child's Social Security number**
- 5) Medical insurance of child (if applicable)**
- 6) IEP or IFSP (if applicable)**
- 7) Legal guardianship (if applicable)**
- 8) Documentation of foster care (if applicable)**

To apply to Head Start or receive more information, call (601) 923-3950.

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REGISTRATION: 1st Saturdays 8:30 A.M.

REGULAR SESSIONS: 1st & 3rd Saturdays 9-10 A.M., 10-11 A.M., 11-12 NOON

WEEKLY SESSION:
By request on Thursdays 5 or 6 P.M.

Jannie Johnson
Founder and Director

We, the teachers and staff, are committed to helping boys and girls establish personal reasons for doing right and going straight. We are confident that they CAN learn to live principle-centered lives and like it, too. Why not?

No child has to be bad!!! Call us or come see us, anytime!