



ENTERTAINMENT



Life vs Love: A conversation with Stefunie

By Amia D. Edwards
Jackson Advocate Lifestyle/Entertainment Writer

Her stage name is Stefunie. But I know her as the fabulous Stephanie Lockett. Stephanie has lent her beautiful soprano voice to several of my theatrical projects so conversations about being creative and encouraging the best in each other is a constant between us.



Amia Edwards

With the release of her album, *Life vs Love* (now available on all digital platforms), I wanted to include you in our latest conversation about the high and low notes of life.

Amia Edwards (AE): You call Jackson, MS home. But where did you grow up?

Stephanie Lockett (SL): I was born in Grenada. My mother and father then married and went to Hawaii. His military career led us all over, but we always came back to Hawaii. I spent my middle and high school years there. So Hawaii is home-away-from-home, for sure.

AE: How did growing up on the island influence you artistically? From Grenada to Hawaii – that’s a lot of culture shock? No?

SL: A lot of people don’t know, but there are a lot of African Americans in Hawaii. Southern Soul is definitely a thing there, because there are so many military bases there. The locals love R&B, Gospel, Neo Soul, and Blues. You can even

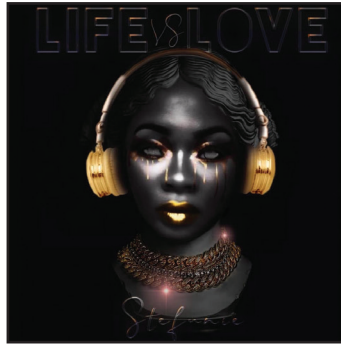
hear the sound influence in the music of local artists. I could not escape southern influence in my music.

AE: On another subject, is it true your baby helped design your album cover?

SL: Yes! My oldest. My daughter is currently at Jackson State. I told her the concept; she asked for a selfie and the next morning she showed me and I knew that was it!

AE: How do you blend being a single mother and an artist?

SL: It is hard, just being honest. I sang background for a long time to make some money. Being a lead artist is very demanding! While singing background, I just learned the music, got my money, and went back home. My children were



a long as I could. He told me I don’t belong behind anybody.

AE: I think it’s safe to say your fans are behind you. What can they expect on this album? And, what’s the inspiration behind the title?

SL: Initially the album was called *Chemistry*, which is one of the songs on the album. *Life vs Love* is basically talking about relationships. The friendship of a relationship. The hatred of a relationship. The love of a relationship.

AE: Let’s talk about dating and the pursuit of love. You know how I feel about the dating scene.

SL: But if you do not date, you can’t see what you do and do not want. I think that’s why God allows us to date people. Because, once you get to who He has for you, all that “stuff” will be out of the way.

AE: Did you go through that “stuff” and sing about it on *Life vs Love*?

SL: YES! You will hear it in each song. We recorded about 40 songs and it was hard for me to narrow it down to the 9 that are on the album, because I wanted people to feel what I went through in relationships.



Stephanie Lockett (Stefunie)

young when I started out and I had to put what they needed first before I could do anything I wanted. They come first no matter what. I continued to do background until they got older. It was then that Calvin Richardson fired me.

AE: Fired?!

SL: Yes! He told me if he didn’t let me go I would remain content singing background for

AE: How are you using this downtime gifted by COVID to grow creatively or personally?

SL: I promised the Lord while going through and battling my own COVID diagnosis that I will find a way (regardless of where I am) to intertwine Him into everything I do. I made that promise and I’m going to keep it. I want people to know that God is in me. He gave me a gift and it’s because of Him I’m where I’m at.

AE: AMEN!

SL: God is still in the blessing business – despite a pandemic.

AE: AMEN!

AE: My condolences on the loss of a dear friend. Can we talk about how God gets us through the grieving process? Do you agree with me that grief is a gift? Just like He sends the angel of death, He sends one for grief to get the living through the wave of emotions? When death has to go, grief can stay.

SL: Yes! When I was grieving, I didn’t know it. I became so angry! I didn’t know why. It took a co-worker to tell me that De’Etta would not want me to stay in it. De’Etta was a dear friend. She was my biggest supporter. She was my road manager, my assistant. I don’t think there is a show that she missed. I am so grateful that she got to hear all my music before she passed. She was the first person I let listen to everything.

AE: How did the mourning process influence this project?

SL: Musically, her death pushed me so much because she pushed me so much when she was living. I want to make her proud.


AE: And that’s also a part of life and love, ain’t it?

SL: Absolutely!



Singer-songwriter, Teneia will be playing the concert series Red Boots Roots via Zoom on Sat., Sept. 5. There’s a \$15 donation ask and you can RSVP for the 90 minute show. Also, on September 12th, Rita Brent and Teneia are performing a music and comedy show that is all about female empowerment. Get your tickets now at the early bird special price of \$10. The tickets will go up to \$15 starting September 5th. For tickets and more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/teneiamusic/>





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2020
GENERAL ELECTION
CALENDAR

* Open Saturday Oct. 3rd
from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
for Voter Registration

Voter Registration
Deadline
Monday, Oct. 5th

Absentee Ballots Available
September 21


Saturdays Open for Absentee Voting
October 24 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon
Last Day to Absentee Vote Oct. 31
from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

General
Election Day
November 3

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