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spring 2022

Pamela Hart Reaches for the Stars While Standing on Earth!

By William T. Jackson, ABA, B.Acy., MBA

With a career spanning two decades, the vocally astute Pamela Hart is highly regarded as Austin, Texas' finest Jazz vocalist. In many circles, she is Austin's First Lady of Jazz. Pamela is a keystone of Jazz music in Austin. To ensure the protection and preservation of the valuable musical art form called Jazz, and support her love for live performance, she and Kevin C. Hart founded Women in Jazz Association, Inc., the 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization with the mission to provide performance opportunities and experiences for professional and non-professional Jazz vocalists and instrumentalists in the area.

Pamela produced her first concert in 1992, while serving on the board of the Black Arts Alliance. She suggested a Black Women in Jazz concert and was appointed to produce it. "I wanted to be successful, so I researched how to produce concerts and found a book, entitled A Guide to Concert Production, at the Austin Public Library. I learned the steps to produce a concert and the necessary pre-concert activities. It was a good starting point."

She applies her designation as a Certified Project Manager to

concert production. In concert with her kind human nature and dedication to the advocacy of artists, Women in Jazz Association, Inc., continues to achieve remarkable success. Through the none-profit, Pamela produced live performances with 70 highly-esteemed female artists, including Nancy Wilson, Dianne Reeves, and Rachel Farrell.

During the Nancy Wilson production, she learned the importance of artist riders and preferences. Artists have their own approach to a performance and need space to get adjusted to the city, the venue, and the stage. "I had to learn how important it is to discuss the artist rider to determine what is important to an artist. I could not get offended by artists' preferences for backstage activities and dressing room requirements. Getting this right ensure a great performance," Hart said.

A big challenge to concert production came in 2015, when hurricane Katrina affected sales and attendance. But The Harts decided to continue the concert. Although attendance was low, Rachele Farrell gave a great show, and Women in Jazz Association, Inc.'s reputation for

keeping their word was intact. Pamela's is known as a producer who treats artists well, feeds them backstage with her own cooking, and pays everyone on time.

Another integral part of Pamela's success is the partnerships she has developed to keep Women in Jazz Association, Inc. active with productions. A constant source of funding for Women in Jazz, Inc. projects are the City of Austin's Cultural Arts Division of the Economic Development Department, Texas Commission on the Arts, and corporations like McDonalds and the Austin Revitalization Authority. Her organization oversees annual production budgets of \$85,000 or more per year. She works with other partners for transportation assistance and backstage catering.

Also, Pamela produces vocal workshops and youth programs. Through a partnership with the George Washington Carver Museum and Culture Center, Women in Jazz, Inc. has produced an annual Youth Summit, providing a full day of vocal workshops, dancing, film, vision boarding, painting, and sound engineering.



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Pamela was born February 7, 1960, in Los Angeles, California. Her family exposed her to various genres of music. Her fondness of Jazz stemmed from Jazz playing in her home. A cherished childhood memory was leaving for school, after DJ Brad Pride, Jr.'s signed off the air with Nancy Wilson's I Had a Ball.

Her mother, Christine Whitehead, encouraged her to sing for family and friends. When they moved to Austin in 1982, she frequented the Austin Public Library to check out Jazz vocalist records and learn more about Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, and other vocal aficionados. The library was her source for deepening her knowledge of Jazz and vocal stylings.

The greatest lessons came from her mentor Dr. James Polk, Music Director for Ray Charles. Polk contracted her to perform with the Texas State University Jazz Band he directed in European festival

including Montreux, Vienne, and Juan des Pins Jazz festivals. She worked with Dr. Polk at the Internal Association for Jazz Educators' conferences in Toronto and California, the Corpus Christi Jazz Festival, and most of the Women in Jazz concerts when she was on the performance roster.

Pamela has keen business sense and has an undergraduate degree in Economics from UCLA and an MBA from Texas State University. For her personal music business, she and Kevin formed HartBeat Productions in 1993, to manage her booking, recording, marketing, and concert productions.

Pamela has made a positive and noteworthy difference in the Austin Jazz scene and abroad. She received awards for community work as a Jazz supporter, including the Connie Yearwood Conner National Woman of Achievement Award, Jazz at St. James A.D. Mannion Award, Texas State University

Outstanding Alumni Award, Links Austin Chapter Arts Award, and the BOSS Award of Distinction. She was inducted into the Austin Jazz Society Hall of Fame in 2018.

Pamela's latest release is Happy Talk, a superb compilation of studio work with her mentor, arranger, and producer Dr. James Polk. This collection showcases Pamela's favorite songs that caressed her ears, while growing up in Los Angeles, California. Happy Talk is music many will be listening to for years to come.

The challenges of the past two years can be thwarted by music that is medicine for the soul. Happy Talk is the prescription we need. The collection of standards is compiled, wonderfully, with superb production and Pamela Hart proves herself to be a consummate artist with flawless effort, again.

Visit her website

www.pamelahart.com.

Women In Jazz

ASSOCIATION, INC.

Keeping Jazz Alive in Austin, Texas and the World

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