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LINDA AUBERT

Strength And Determination Makes Music *"Food For Her Soul"*

By Anita Oubre

Strength is beauty”
so the saying goes.
If that is true, then
Linda Aubert is one
of the most beautiful women to
grace the stages in New Orleans.

The strength and determination that she holds strong, well into the second half

of her life story, is admirable and courageous. A gifted musical professional, she is a very talented composer, songwriter/lyricist, pianist, singer, playwright and poet. Her musical career spans over 30 years with performances locally, nationally and internationally. And her passion for her art form is unparalleled.

Linda was born in New Orleans and raised as an Uptown girl on South Liberty Street in the home of her grandmother and great-grandmother. As an only child, she was doted on and mainly raised by her loving grandmother, Emma Birdie Brown. She calls her upbringing “modest” but emphasizes they were “fancy women”

nonetheless.

“My grandmother was very supportive of me. She was the greatest influence of my life,” recalled Linda.

Linda was encouraged by her grandmother to play the piano. At age seven she started taking lessons and in just a few years, at age 11, she was playing for her church. In grade school she attended Samuel J. Green and McDonough #6, where she learned to play the saxophone. At Alcee Fortier High School she joined the band playing alto sax. In her senior year, and after a summer of lessons, she was invited to play double bass in the orchestra.



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"I always read music well. Thereafter, I started learning what more could be done with that knowledge, and soon I was playing music all over New Orleans," said Linda.

Over the summer after Linda graduated from high school she was given the opportunity of a lifetime. It was the late '60s when the peace movement was in full swing. In a stellar high school event called Folk Fest, Linda said, "I was playing saxophone and bass at that time. And after joining the Folk Fest players, for the movement, I decided I would sing 'People' by Barbra Streisand. And I did so a cappella. It was an amazing time," Linda recalled.

From that performance alone, with the help of a dearly loved music professor, Peter Dombourian, Linda became the first African American to win an amateur audition with the New Orleans Summer Pops. This put her in the spotlight in their Summer Concert Series at the end of her senior year. Her rendition of "Free Again" and "As Long as He Needs Me" proved to be immense. This opportunity would open the door for other African Americans in the future and it also brought the opportunity for Linda to sing with the Loyola Jazz Band.

Linda enrolled in the Loyola College of Music and began to blossom musically. Music began to take her on a journey where she would break racial and gender



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norms of the time. She won the Best Vocalist Award for Loyola at the Mobile Collegiate Jazz Festival during her time with the Loyola Jazz Band. And being celebrated, she was asked to join a popular band with a handful of Loyola students where she was given the moniker "black chick singer." They played all over New Orleans at that time.

Shortly thereafter Linda was recruited for a band called "Les Girls." Gigs started coming in more frequently and Linda started singing and playing for the famed Playboy Club in the French Quarter with the likes of Johnny Vidacovich, Al Belletto, Frank Pazzullo, Angelle Trosclair, Bill Huntington and Richie Payne.

"Those nights were long as we performed in Penthouse lounges and downstairs in the Playroom. But I was establishing myself as a singer and musician and it was wonderful," said Linda.

School would have to be put on the back burner for the time when Linda was invited to New York City to perform. Shortly into her New York stint a booking agency approached her and an arrangement was made to send her on gigs all over the United States. She played at many of the big hotels and had the opportunity to travel to Japan, Bermuda, Indonesia and Puerto Rico. Linda was experiencing a great high performing all over but something was missing.

"People loved me and it was great, but I wanted more. I wanted to concentrate on jazz and improvisation. I had my own style and needed to work on it," reflected Linda.

Her musical influences include Carmen McRae, Duke Ellington, Freddie Hubbard, Miles Davis, Nancy Wilson, Dinah Washington, Gregory Porter and many more greats. Always on the path to acquiring new skills, Linda enrolled in the film scoring program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where she obtained a certificate in film scoring.

This is where she learned to write for and work in the recording studio with an orchestra.

While living in Los Angeles, in her spare time, Linda was a contributing writer for the LA Watts Times. But her main focus was and is music. She still enjoys the challenge of composing music for TV and film and presenting it to decision makers in the music industry. "I love making music. It is food for my soul," she emphasized.

As a composer-lyricist, she is currently shopping for a theatre company and/or producers for her musical, "Choo Choo Me Home," which is based on the American Pullman Porter and their experiences as porters in the '30s and '40s. Solely African American and hired by George Pullman, the inventor and owner of the first sleeping car in America's mode of luxury transportation, Pullman Porters realized a better way of life with their new-found fortune.

She is also the composer, lyricist and playwright of "Creation," a dance musical adaptation of the creation of man as told in the Book of Genesis. Linda welcomes conversations for funding and production on both of these projects.

Another project that Linda is passionate



COURTESY: LINDA AUBERT

COVER STORY



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about is called “Sweet Jubilee” which she envisions having many different artists working together to create something beautiful and similar to the very popular “We are the World” (U.S. for Africa) project.

Although Linda has been back living in

New Orleans for many years, she feels the jazz scene is not what it once was nor are there many opportunities for jazz artists.

“Modern jazz is the music I reach for to touch my soul,” said Linda.

She also enjoys the music ministry that she is part of every week at both Brooks Shaw Temple United Methodist Church and First Street Peck Wesley United Methodist Church. Before the pandemic Linda enjoyed a weekly Friday night gig that was severed due to the threat of COVID-19.

“COVID has made us all regroup. Nonetheless, I am looking for new



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opportunities to play in New Orleans,” said Linda. “I’m hoping for a breakthrough booking at a local New Orleans venue or hotel; a niche that is right for me, so I can share my music with New Orleans again.”

Until then, this holiday season she is looking forward to releasing two singles: a solo piano version of “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” and “Hallelujah Christ is Born,” an original Christmas classic. You can hear her latest release, “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho,” streaming currently on most music media sites. It is available for download on her website - New Genesis Music Company (NGMC) www.newgenesismusiccompany.com, along with previously recorded singles and other original music and music compositions.

To book Linda Aubert for events or other special occasions call her at (504) 899-9712 or email her at newgenesismusiccompany@gmail.com. You can also reach her via her website: newgenesismusiccompany.com. 🎶