

Connecting with her audience:

Singer Lisa Amos feeds off of her fans' energy

By Anita Oubre

Music has a way of bringing people together and when Lisa Amos brings her showmanship and her powerful voice to the stage, the audience comes together in unison to not only listen but to participate.

"I wanted to be an entertainer and connect with my audience," Lisa said as she recounted her musical journey during a recent interview. "I know how a certain song makes me feel and we can all relate to those feelings," she added.

Perhaps her talent was already in the family genes when Lisa made the decision to pursue her muse on the public stage. Her mother, Diana, was a powerful songstress who performed with Sugar Boy (Crawford) and The Sugar Lumps, as well as with The Del Rays. "My mother was my greatest inspiration before she passed in 2010," Lisa said admiringly. "I adored her and I wanted to follow in her footsteps."

As a young girl, Lisa watched in awe as her mother prepared for her gigs. "She was beautiful and she dressed in the most beautiful outfits. I wanted to be just like her," Lisa recalled. But, acknowledging her other influences, she added, "I have also learned from all the greats like Stephanie Mills, Whitney Houston, Patti LaBelle and Aretha Franklin. I can take their music and make it my own."



PHOTO BY: GAVAN J. AMOS

At a recent Sunday evening show at Club Link, this sultry and soulful songstress and her One Night Stand Band took the audience on a musical journey back through time. Her performances can be described as a real Lady Fest because the ladies in the audience come to engage in the experience with this talented performer. Lisa belts out songs that both men and women can relate to, but when she puts all of her sentiments and her own personal experiences into the music, the women who are there do not hold back. Emotions that they thought were buried somewhere in the past come to the surface when Lisa sings about love, relationships and respect.

Audience participation includes standing, shouting, waving of arms and lots of dancing. Lisa joins them in a communion of warmth and spirit. She feeds off the energy of the crowd. Between her and Jerry Henderson, her bass player/musical director of 15 years, the two are able to read the crowd and give them exactly what they came for.

"I try to base my playlist on songs that I can give their just due," said Lisa. "My audience depends on me to perform and deliver, just like I depend on them to listen and relate."



PHOTOS BY: GAVAN J. AMOS

The relationship apparently works, as Lisa has been entertaining her fans for nearly 30 years. They love her relatable and approachable style and they keep coming back for more. She receives feedback, accolades and lots of love in her inbox from people who enjoy the show and want to know when they can see her again. Lisa and her crew have won them over with personality, a warm demeanor and spectacular entertainment.

In addition to Henderson, the band consists of Alfred Salvant on drums, Kendrick Marshall on keyboard and Valerie George and Miranda Rogers on



backup vocals. The chemistry between the six of them is impressive. They feed off each other's energy and know each other's every move.

Lisa was born to Bennie Amos Sr. and Diana Degruy, and she was raised in New Orleans' musically rich 6th Ward. She and her siblings enjoyed playing hopscotch and tether ball together. Going to summer camp at the local community center was something she looked forward to when not in class at William O. Rogers and later McDonough #28 schools. She was an honors student when she graduated from John McDonough. After her parents divorced, Lisa and her siblings spent time with both her mother and father as they shared co-parenting responsibilities.

The house where she grew up on Dorgenois Street consisted of her aunts, uncles and cousins, and Lisa enjoyed the closeness of a huge family presence. Sundays were filled with five-course meals that her grandmother lovingly prepared.



"It was a much simpler time; a beautiful time with our matriarchs guiding the family," Lisa recalled.

Lisa got her start singing with her cousins on the porch and then moved on to performing in talent shows. And, even though her brothers and sister constantly teased her about her singing, she was determined to succeed. It didn't take long for Lisa to get her first gig.

"My mom's band was playing a kiddie dance at the Labor Union Hall and she called me up on the stage while she was singing "Boogie Oogie," Lisa recalled. "So I picked up a tambourine and went on stage with her."

Determination has continued to pay off for Lisa, as she has been entertaining professionally in nightclubs and at festivals for many years, including a lengthy engagement at Seal's Class Act lounge.

However, although Lisa puts her all into the music and commands the stage, there is another stage on which she is equally at home. In addition to being a blessing as an entertainer, she has also been a blessing to her patients in her role as a dialysis nurse. As an LPN for 14 years, Lisa knew that she wanted to take her nursing career to the next level. Determination and her love of caring for others brought her back to the classroom at Charity School of Nursing where she graduated with honors and was awarded her RN certification.

"Being a caregiver is everything to me. I can see the difference I'm making and I treat my patients like my family," said Lisa. "They get everything; all the love, but they also get fussed at when not taking care of



Gavan J. Amos



Lisa enjoying time with her sons: Troy, Furnell, and Gavan



The serious side of Lisa



Lisa Amos Baby performing at a banquet



Miranda Rogers, Valerie George vocalists with Lisa Amos center.

themselves properly.”

Lisa is proud that she has been a blessing to people, both through her music and medically. However, she boasts her greatest accomplishment as being the mother to her three sons - Troy, Furnell and Gavan, who passed away this past August from a bilateral pulmonary embolism.

Gavan was a musically gifted rapper and was always by his mother’s side, Lisa fondly recalls. She keeps his memory alive by celebrating him every chance she gets, and she adores spending time with her grandson, Kyan, in whom she sees so much of Gavan. She has even lovingly

incorporated Gavan’s music into her show.

“Family was important to Gavan, so we rally now more than ever to come together,” she said. “I value those joyous moments when we are all together giving of one another and loving one another.”

Lisa knows that Gavan’s spirit, as well as that of her mother, are still with her. She feels their presence encouraging her when she is performing. Whether Lisa is recording, writing a new song or performing, she is at peace.

“Music is my sanctuary; I am free and I am in love,” Lisa proclaimed as she wrapped up the interview. “Even if there

is a bad day or if I am not in a good spirit, I have no worries in the world when I am singing.”

You can hear selections from Lisa Amos’s CD, “Cause you Love Me” at https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lisa+amos+cause+you+love+me or purchase the album at local record stores. Lisa’s music can also be found on iTunes, Amazon music, Apple music, iHeart radio and Spotify. To find out where she is performing visit her Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.amossings>, Instagram @lisaamosbaby and Twitter @LisaAmosmusic.

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