

DETROIT

Entertainers & Musicians News

March-April 2025

Vol. 19, No. 2

FREE!

ARCHIVED

Interviews:

- Will Downing
- Gerald Albright



Alisa King
Recording Artist

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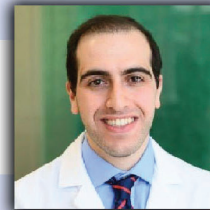
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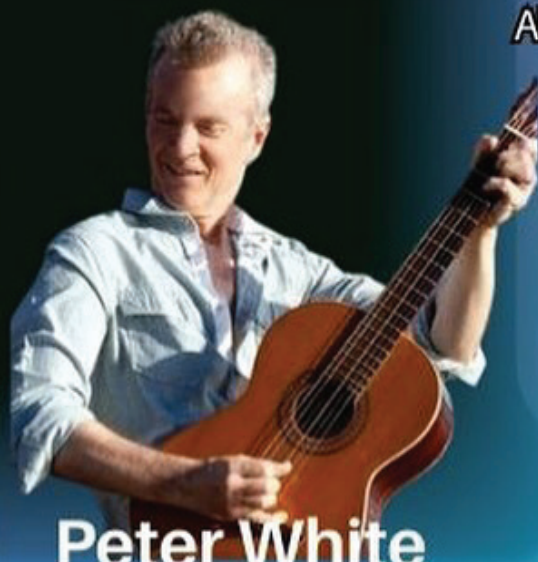
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Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News

March – April 2025

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(** = Archived Article)

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The Staff of **Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News** feels it is our humbled duty to bring to you information that matters to you. We know that the needs of entertainers and musicians are not always the same as the audience we serve.

With that in mind, we'd like for you to know this is a publication owned and operated by entertainers and musicians.

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Foundation of Detroit EM News

Since our inception in 2007, Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News (Detroit EM News) has remained deeply committed to celebrating Detroit's rich musical heritage. Known for its outstanding musicians and entertainers, Detroit EM News values our community's artistic talents and has dedicated its platform to promote, the "Entertainer's Written Words" and highlight achievements of Detroit metro area residents.



Nevertheless, we are increasingly concerned about a significant issue within the entertainment arena. Despite the beauty of music that embodies love, tragedy, and hope, many artists lack health insurance and struggle to access sufficient medical care or preventive resources. This often results in inadequate medical support, which can jeopardize their health and well-being.

Years ago, Detroit EM News participated in a benefit for the late **Arthur "Buster" Marbury**, a celebrated drummer of the "Temptations," aimed at alleviating some of the burgeoning medical costs associated with hospitalization and treatment. Therefore, to tackle some of these pressing issues, as artists and supporters of the musicians and entertainers we organize benefits to help cover medical and bereavement expenses. These "benefit affairs" have become a favored practice among artists in the industry. The events are frequently organized by fellow artists and are aimed specifically at generating immediate funds for healthcare needs, heaven forbid, funeral costs including bereavement and wrap-around services.



During Buster's benefit event, Detroit EM News posed two questions to gather insights on the challenges artists face now and historically.

- 1) Do you have health coverage?
- 2) What advice would you offer to artists lacking coverage?

"Yes, I currently possess health coverage. I believe health coverage is a concern that many musicians and entertainers ponder and desire, yet due to their hectic schedules, they often neglect to explore their options for obtaining it. Health care is crucial as it ensures access to essential medical necessities when needed. I think a significant number of African American people tend to underestimate the importance of health care, which is vital for our well-being, stated **Ralphe Armstrong.**"

The beloved renowned trumpeter **Marcus Belgrave** once remarked, "I've spent over 60 years in the industry as a union musician, and for the past 40 to 45 years, we've been discussing this issue. I'm part of the Jewish Federation of Musicians. Throughout my career, musicians in Detroit have never had health insurance. Various organizations have attempted to address this challenge for musicians, yet it remains incredibly difficult to achieve, primarily because we lack sufficient venues to perform."



As Foundress of Detroit EM News, obviously, some artists are fortunate enough to have stable 9-to-5 jobs or be self-employed, offering them resources to secure some level of health or medical coverage over time. Unfortunately, for most entertainers and musicians, this isn't an isolated issue but rather a widespread problem—many find themselves without health coverage or supportive services, both nationally and potentially globally.

Detroit EM News believes that the themes of Love and Hope expressed in these songs should not continue to reflect the tragedies faced by this unique community due to inadequate healthcare benefits and resources. It is imperative that action be taken to establish a foundation that provides benefits for performing artists. Our aim is to ensure that musicians and entertainers have access to preventive care, as well as support and benefits for their families, including bereavement and crisis assistance.

One of our objectives at Detroit EM News is to highlight available resources to assist musicians and entertainers during challenging times. The Federation of Musicians is an excellent source of support but again the cost to become associated can be excessive for most entertainers. However, one notable organization is our sister entity, the Detroit Metro Area Musicians & Entertainers Association (DMAMEA). They have been around for over thirty years, as a membership-based organization. Get to know DMAMEA and the affordable wrap around services they provide to performing artists.

To find more about benefits and other resources, click on: www.dmamea.org , email: DMAMEA@detroitemnews.com or call: 313.506.5800.

BY: Adrienne Collins

Photos: Detroit EM News & Teresa Marbury/FB





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□Pinocchio □ The Wooden Boy□

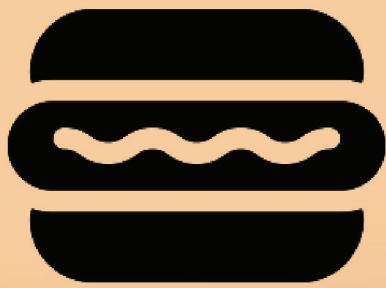
(circa, 2009)



I hope you enjoy the comic as much as I enjoy drawing for you. However, I feel that I owe you an explanation. Over the past years, some of the subject matter in “Free from Jepeto,” while not necessarily the views and/or opinions of Detroit EM News, it may have been “edgy” by the magazine’s standards. And rather than compromise artistic integrity, I’ve decided to create something new for our readers to laugh at.

If the real boy Pinocchio is free from the puppet master (Jepeto’s physical control), then “Pinocchio – The Wooden Boy” is just the opposite. But don’t worry, I promise to keep it funny. For the new fans of “Free From Jepeto” look for new episodes coming soon on a special link @ www.detroitemnews.com. *Troy Morrow* – Cartoonist/Artist/Contributive Writer.





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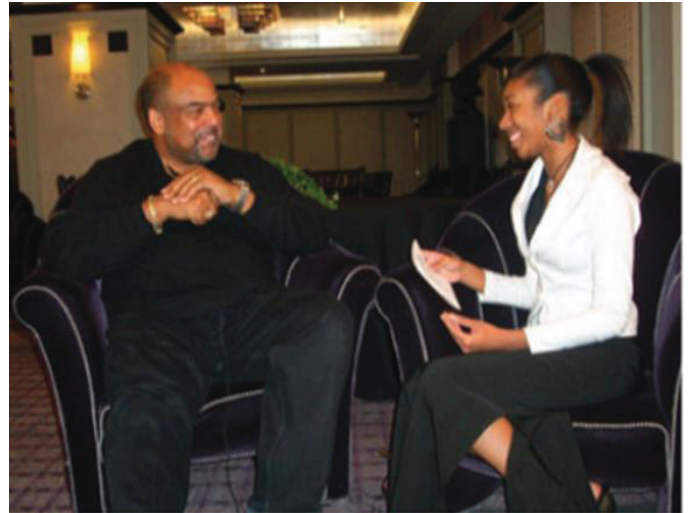
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Gerald Albright's Interview

Detroit Opera House
(circa, 2009)

TR: "Hello, I'm Tiffani Rucker, a broadcast media student at Golightly Career and Technical Center and a junior reporter for Detroit EM News. You are Mr. Gerald Albright, a multi-talented musician and producer. You were born and raised in South Central, Los Angeles, correct?"

GA: "Yes!"



Gerald Albright & Tiffani Rucker

TR: "You learned to play the piano at a very young age. Living and growing up in South Central, didn't you get teased for playing piano for what is known as a soft instrument?"

GA: "Well, yeah, I did get teased, but I was a very energetic kid, and I really wasn't really interested in piano at that time. I wanted to go outside and play with the other kids in the neighborhood. So, I only stayed with piano for about a year then I went to saxophone. But I wasn't teased at all."

TR: "That's good. This is a three-part question: Tell us about your upbringing and your siblings and during that time can you share a highlight or a memorable time surrounding the performing arts?"

GA: "Well, I have one sibling. I have an older brother; his name is William. He lives in Maryland. And at the time, he was playing piano. He was the real pianist in the family. One thing that I do remember is going around to different churches in the South-Central area, in Los Angeles, and playing. I used to play bongos too—little bongos and congas. As a young lad played congas, and he played piano. And it was a nice little novelty we shared going around to different churches and stuff. We had fun. We only knew one tune, so it was the shortest concert you could imagine. But we had a good time."

TR: "What tune did you guys know?"

GA: "It was called 'Prelude in G.' It was a classical tune originally but we kind of put the funk on it, you know, brought it up to date."

TR: "Currently you play several instruments, which is your favorite and why?"

GA: "Well, I love them all. If I had to pick a favorite, I would say alto saxophone. That's the sound that I'm known for actually. And I've been playing alto since I was nine years old. Some of my mentors were Cannonball Adderley and Maseo Parker, Charlie Parker—people like that. So, alto is the closest to me, but I love tenor and soprano saxophone. In recent years, I've gotten associated with the baritone saxophone. I also love bass guitar. I play a lot of bass guitar on various tracks on my records. And I have 13 CDs out there now. And as I bassist, I've played on at least half of those songs."

TR: "Our research discovered that your wife, Glenis, was your junior high school sweetheart. How long have you all been married?"

GA: "We've been together 37 years."

TR: "Wow!"

GA: "Yeah, 37 years and she's my best friend. She was there when there were no gigs and I was trying to find a gig. So, that's the person I trust the most. She's been right there with me and I'm so proud that we're still together. We have a wonderful family; we have two kids. My daughter is 27 and my son just turned 19 a few days ago; so, one happy family."

TR: "Your new CD is entitled "Sax for Stax." Why that particular name?"

GA: "Well, we're celebrating the music of Stax Records. Stax has been around for 50 years as of 2007. "So, we wanted to help them celebrate. And a lot of the icons that were a part of the label were The Staple Singers, Isaac Hayes—these are people before your time—Johnny Taylor, The Dramatics, Eddie Floyd, a whole lot of people. So, we picked about seven cover tunes, three of which are Isaac Hayes, and we also coupled that with some original material to come up with the project "Sax for Stax." It features my good friend Will Downing, Phillip Bailey from Earth, Wind and Fire, Letter C and my good friend Kirk Whalum. So, I'm very proud of this project."

TR: "You should be! It sounds like a great project. Can you please explain, what is "Straight Ahead Jazz?"

GA: "Well, we call it "Old School." However, "Straight Ahead Jazz" is what the genre of music that you hear today stems from. Rap artists now use samples from traditional jazz. We're going back to the Charlie Parker and Miles Davis period. It's a genre of total expression. It's the freest music that I've ever experienced. It is a music that requires a lifetime to learn and I'm still learning. Even though I'm a professional musician, I'm still a student because you never stop learning. So, I'm constantly trying to get to the next level of traditional jazz and the other forms of jazz music that I've been experiencing through my lifetime."



Gerald Albright

BY: Tiffani Rucker

Photos: Detroit EM News

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Alise King

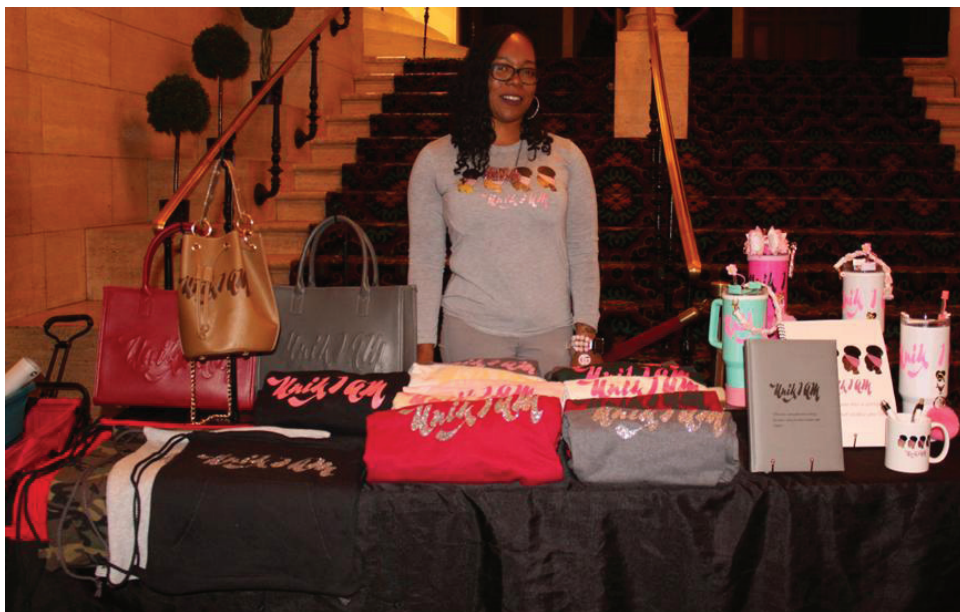
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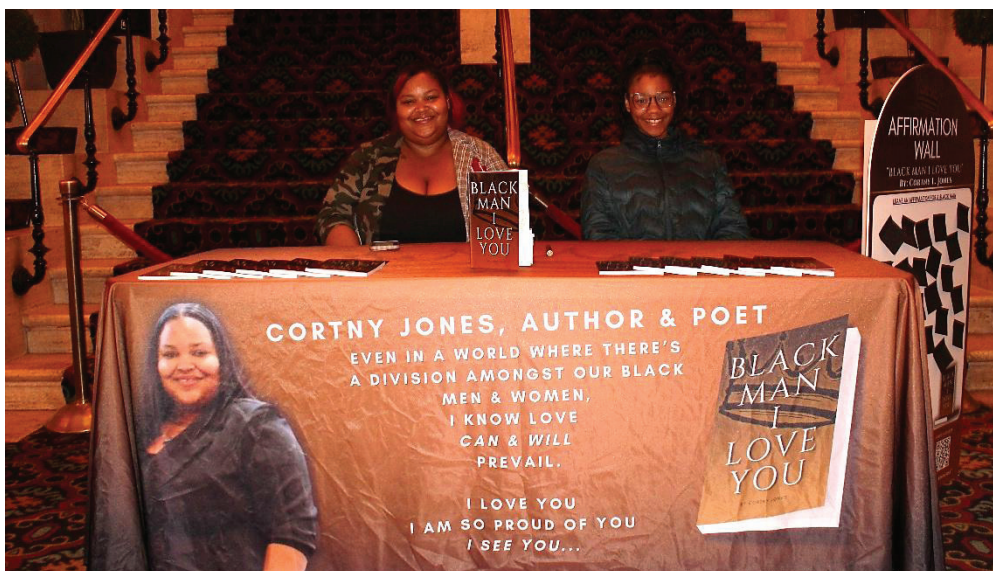
Upon arrival to the historic Detroit Music Hall, and inside, Aretha's Jazz Café, I entered to find Alise King, the woman of the hour, extending a warm greeting as she briefed me on the evening's itinerary. After a short conversation, we agreed to hold an interview following her performance. However, in that moment, she introduced me to an array of Black female vendors at the front of the Aretha's Jazz Café, proudly showcasing their merch and artwork.



To my left was Shayla Unik with Unik HR Solutions selling an array of bags, purses, reusable cups, notebooks and more, all adorned with her elegant logo.



To my right was author Cortny Jones celebrating the release of her new poetry collection entitled, "Black Man, I Love You." Next to the table sat a board where people could write affirmations to Black Men, and you could see from the excited smile as she encouraged folks to utilize the board and expressed how proud she was to be doing this work.



Walking further into the 19th century art deco space paired well with the ambiance of the playlist including artists like Tammi Terrell, Marvin Gaye, Gladys Knight and the Pips and even artists I'd never heard of that I eagerly pulled out my Shazam app to add to my own playlists. The Black excellence was palpable and flowed through the space beautifully, along with the sense of community. In the interim, Alise MC'd and introduced every single act with contagious appreciation and love in her voice. Her band, "The Alise King Experience," opened the show and their instrumental sets had my shoulders bouncing and everyone clapping loudly immediately after the last note. Watching the musicians look of focus, on their faces and the way they jammed to their own playing truly illustrated the love and intention with which this entire night was planned.





Next up was “Queen C” aka Crystal Cummings, a singer that brought a variety of spunk, sass and genuine appreciation for Black life and love in both her song choice and magnetic stage presence. The audience was more than happy to join her in song.



Poet “Cortny” came up following and read several poems from “Black Man, I Love You” that made my eyes water and touched my heart. The radiant smile on her face after finishing lit the entire room.



When it was time for Alise to arrive on stage, she was introduced and instantly we felt we were more of her friends than an audience. She shared true feelings she had before coming on stage; how life was affecting her at the time and even the pain she pushed through to be standing, talking to us at that moment. Her spirit inspired Chris, the drummer to invite us all to pray for her. The Holy Spirit of the Lord was felt throughout that room and what a powerful introduction that was to her performance. I would use the word "gifting" to describe what we experienced, as well. The old school jams Alisa sang were on all our lips as she brought the whole show home, singing from her soul and giving us her best. After reintroducing her band and reminding us to tip the bartenders/servers, it was my honor to interview the event host and headliner, Alise King.



Alisa King's Interview

@Aretha's Jazz Café

Q: Share a moment that a song you sang tonight brought you back to that time?

A: “(A knowing laugh) The first time I saw my partner. I’m a very shy person, I’m very sensitive, but it was something about them that just drew me to them, and I knew I wanted them in my life. If music can make you feel like that about another person - because it’s a universal language - then I need to know who you are, I at least need to know your name. (She laughs again)”

Q: Share an R&B song you didn’t sing tonight that is close to your heart?

A: “No Pain - No Gain by Betty Wright, and the reason I say that is because I’m a lyricist. Betty says, ‘In order to get something, you have to give something. In order to be something, you gotta go through something.’ So, she talks about the ups and downs of life. Not only love but you can’t expect things and not put something in. You can’t expect greatness if you don’t put in the work; you can’t expect love if you don’t give love, so you get what you are. No pain no gain, you’re gonna cry and have trying times, you gonna go through some stuff, but it’s gonna be okay because the other side is coming. If you don’t go through no pain you don’t have blessings coming.”

Q: “What’s your favorite thing about singing?”

A: “My favorite thing about singing is that I disappear on the stage. Even though I’m front and center, when I open my mouth no one can see me, and I can be anything that I want to be on that stage. I’m my most free self on stage. I feel like I levitate... I’m untouchable. I’m not judged; I don’t have a label on me. I don’t have to deal with life, bills, problems; in that moment I’m just...existing. Existing between the notes and the rhythms and inside of those lyrics. I’m just existing and it is the best, most comfortable, safe space.”

Q: “Do you remember the first time you sang in public and if so, where and what song was it?”

A: “(A chuckle of recognition) Oh Lord, Yes! I was maybe 13. It was a family barbeque, and my aunts had a singing group, and they were singing (in a singsong voice) “Is My Living in Vain” and I started to mimic them. I was singing with my eyes closed and I didn’t realize how loud I was singing, and when I opened my eyes everyone in my family was looking at me. My mom looked at me and said: “She can sing!” And ever since then she was Joe Jackson taking me to every audition, so I was singing at church all the time. That was the first time I sang in public without



even knowing I was singing in public, I just wanted to be like my aunts. Her friend Tanisha comes over at this point and says: "She's lying though." And begins telling the story of how she used to sing after they played basketball, while they were walking home. Most people don't know that about me," Alise says, "I was a hooper, I was a shooter." They both continued to reminisce and even laugh with me and the other folks in attendance. "Them were some good times though. It shaped and molded us for sure."

Q: "In your 2019 Artist-to-Artist Red Carpet Interview for Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News at the Detroit Music Awards, you said, Gospel music is your roots. What's a Gospel song that takes you back?"

A: "I'm old school, my mom would play artists like LaShun Pace, or (she begins singing) Cooling Water... Cooling Water from grandma's well. My favorite Gospel song to sing is, "There's a Leak in this Old Building (by LaShun Pace)." It talks about the cracks in the foundation of your body of yourself, of your spirit and soul, and how God seals, conceals and patches you up until your time is up, until your assignment is done. So that song has always prepared me for the cracks and the holes that life is going to bring. I love that song, it's really powerful."

Q: Did you always know you wanted to be a singer, songwriter, and if not what moment did it click?

A: "So, I grew up in a family of nurses; great grandmother was a nurse, grandmother was a nurse, and aunts were nurses. My mother wanted to be a nurse, but she had a slight learning disability. So, she would see different numbers, different letters, she developed dyslexia. So she instilled in us to get an education. I have five college degrees. (She nods at my look of pleasant surprise). Business, Massage therapy, Healthcare Administration and an associate and bachelor's in music education. I wanted to be a nurse because it was my lineage, but it wasn't where my heart was. So, after I got so many degrees I was trying to find myself but find myself in what other people wanted me to do. And I found that I was my happiest when I sang. I was in choir in school and my whole 12th grade year was music classes because I graduated early. I wanted to sing (professionally) but I didn't know how. It came to me in maybe 2004 when I graduated; I was making good money in my field but was not happy. I worked in my field for about ten years. In about 2014 I caught the attention of Olympia Entertainment, George Clinton, Motor City Casino and they hired me to be his opening act. I held a residency at the casino for ten years which just ended last year because they stopped doing live entertainment. And I haven't worked in corporate since 2014, I've been living off of my gift. My music is what keeps me alive, it's what pays my bills and the air that runs through my body."

Q: If you could go back and tell your younger self something you've learned on your journey what would it be?

A: "Do what's best for you. I was a person pleaser trying to conform like a chameleon and be what everybody wanted me to be. Trying to make everybody else happy, pouring into so many other glasses that I wasn't pouring into my own. It would be doing what's best for you which would have saved me a lot of heartache."

Q: What inspires you as a songwriter?

A: "Everyday life. I like to write and sing about real experiences. I don't want fictitious stuff; I want to sing about something I know the next person can relate to. I'm a real person with real feelings and I go through real things, and I want people to be able to relate to that. Being relatable makes you human, and being human means you're vulnerable, but being vulnerable in your music is not easy to do. But it's something I have to do. A lot of people when I do my events or go on tour, a lot of people are like "I didn't know you went through that or do this type of event or that we could say anything to you." I always come into the audience before or after a show to talk to my fans and supporters because I'm grateful. Without them I wouldn't be here, I would have the platform because it's ordained by God, but they are the driving force of why I'm able to do what I do. So, I want to come out into the audience and love on people and talk to people and hear their stories. I've had people come up to me and tell me that a song I've sung that night saved their life. The money is going to come, the fame and fortune, if it's meant to be. It'll happen but (her face lights up) *that* is the ultimate gratitude. Having someone hug you and tell you: "I was sad tonight when I came to your show but after you got off stage, I felt better." That's the ultimate gratification for me and if I could make just one person feel like that every time I go on stage, job well done Alise! Job, well done!"

Q: What do you feel is your purpose or mission as a singer/song writer?

A: "My purpose is to simply be what I was created to be. A lot of people call me a DIVA: Divine Instrument Vocalizing my Ability and my ability is to use my gift and my gift is my voice whether to talk, encourage, inspire, sing, that's what my gift is. I'm a bridge, I want to bridge the gap between people and music, whether it's singing original songs or cover songs. Music is healing to the soul, and it's saved my life so many times I can't even tell you, by just turning on the radio and letting the music take me away. It's something about music I can't put my finger on, but God knew what he was doing when he created it. That's all I want to be whatever God has for me is for me, when it's meant for me to get it I'll get it. In the meantime, I'm just a vessel and I'm going to be obedient. I do what I'm called to do and utilize my voice, no matter if I'm struggling, like tonight. I struggled hard on stage because I just want to know that my brother's okay, but I also have to be obedient to the mission, and the mission is to sing. Somebody needed me tonight, somebody needed to hear those songs, to get out the house and away from the kids, their job might be messing with them; whatever it is, they needed it. I'ma do it even on the days when it's hard."

Q: What mark do you want to leave on the Detroit Music industry?

A: "If nothing else, I gave my heart to people. I didn't give them an alias, I didn't give them a made-up character, I didn't give them a robot; I gave them an authentic, genuine Alise. Sometimes I'm a mess, sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm scared or nervous. There are times I'm a little cocky like 'I got this', but at the end of the day I gave them authentic me. I share whatever I'm going through in that moment because sharing is not only healing but you never know what someone else might be dealing with, so I give authentic me every time. And one thing people can say about me is that I'm a giver, a sharer. I always try to help out the next artist the next person. If I've done something I don't harbor the information I give it freely, it's not mine to hold; I like to build up, not

tear down. So, if nothing else: That girl can sing, and she gave her true authentic self, and she can cook and cater. (We both laugh, and she emphasizes wanting that to be included)."



I thanked her for her time, and she continued getting things wrapped up for the night, but not before snapping photos with loved ones. I got one too and look back fondly on the event as a whole.

Check out Alise King @ AliseKingMusic.com and on Instagram and Facebook @Alise King Music.

BY: BIN USERKAF

Photos: Detroit EM News

Artist-to-Artist Red Carpet Interviews: Chrissy Morgan with Alisa King for Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News @ 2019 Detroit Music Awards.

Click to view the interview: <https://detroitemnews.com/categories/video/3:alise-king-chrissy-morgan>



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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

In the wake of increasing natural disasters and weather emergencies, communities like Southwest Detroit and parts of California have faced a variety of challenges. From flooding and power outages to wildfires and extreme heat, these crises leave many families in urgent need of shelter, food, and basic necessities. While government aid and relief organizations play a role, faith-based institutions—especially churches—have a unique opportunity to step in and serve as pillars of hope and assistance.

Churches have long been central to community support, and in times of crisis, their role becomes even more vital. They can offer their spaces as emergency shelters, distribute essential supplies, and organize volunteer efforts. However, for churches to effectively respond, they need ongoing community support through donations and volunteer hours.

Congregations and local residents can contribute by donating non-perishable food, bottled water, blankets, hygiene products, and first-aid kits. Equally important is the gift of time volunteers are needed to help with organizing supplies, preparing meals, and checking in on vulnerable neighbors. By stepping up, churches not only provide aid but also create meaningful relationships that transform lives into lasting ways.

Here's a song befitting of life events we experience in times written by family members of Adrienne Collins, Foundress – Detroit EM News. The song was penned by Lois K. Nelson, her mother, and sisters, Dr. Lerrlyn Nelson and Leslie Nelson Ferguson along with Keith Ferguson, Music Producer of the song: “One-to-One.”

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By: *Jeneka Williamson*

Photo: *Detroit EM News*

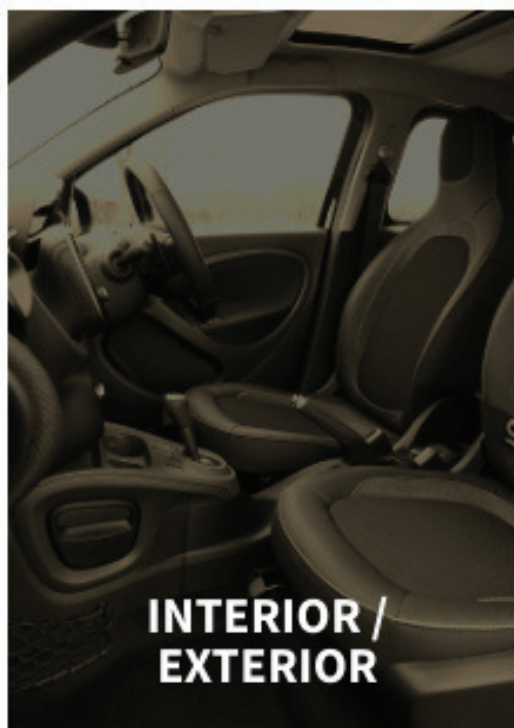




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Detroit Entertainers & Musicians News

Concerts, Events & Shows

MARCH-APRIL 2025

Ford Field, 2000 Brush, 48201

- Billie Joel & Stevie Nicks, March 29 @p
- AC/DC Power Up Tour, April 30 (Doors Open) @ 5:3p

Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward, 48201

- MotorCity Blues Fest, March 29 @7p
- Addams Family Tour, March 22 – 27 @7:3p

Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward, 48201

- Mary J. Blige, March 19 @ 7
- Katt Williams- Heaven on Earth Tour; April 12 @ 8p
- Shakira World Tour – May 22 @ 8p

Sound Board, 2901 Grand River, 48201

- Dwele, March 23 @ 7:3p
- Dramatics, April 12 @ 8p



Will Downing @ Detroit Opera House

(circa 2009)

Welcome, Mr. Will Downing to the City of Detroit, a place we like to call ‘the northern cosmopolitan metropolis.’ We’re here tonight inside the magnificent Detroit Opera House with you, a notable and world-renowned baritone vocalist of jazz and contemporary R & B. You’re also a song writer and producer. With this in mind, we thank you for this wonderful opportunity to video record a brief chronicle of some of your life and musical legacy for our loyal and respectful viewer/ readership.



AR: How are you doing tonight, Mr. Downing?

WD: “I’m doing pretty good, glad to be here, tonight. We’re going to have a great show as we try to do every night. I’m very excited about being here in Detroit.”

AR: You were born in Brooklyn, NY, correct?

WD: “Yes. Born and raised in Brooklyn. My mom and dad still live in Brooklyn. I’m always there visiting them, they’re my roots, that’s where I’ve learned what I do.”

AR: Can you share with us a brief synopsis of your family and upbringing?

WD: “I don’t know if I can make it brief, but basically, I grew up as most young men, all around the world, loving sports and not interested in music. Back then, music was very significant in the public school system. Everyone had to sing, everyone had to play an instrument. I remember, the teachers would walk up and down the lines as everyone sang. They used to come over to me and say, “Your kind of special” and would walk away...then come back, again and say, “You should pursue this a little bit more.” So, by the time I got home, my parents had already signed me up in an extra curriculum program on Saturdays called the “Brooklyn Burroughs – Wide Chorus.” I wasn’t really interested in music, per say. Although, I knew singing would bring the girls around a little bit more. And that’s all I needed. I knew girls liked singers.”

AR: Do you an interest in a musical instrument?

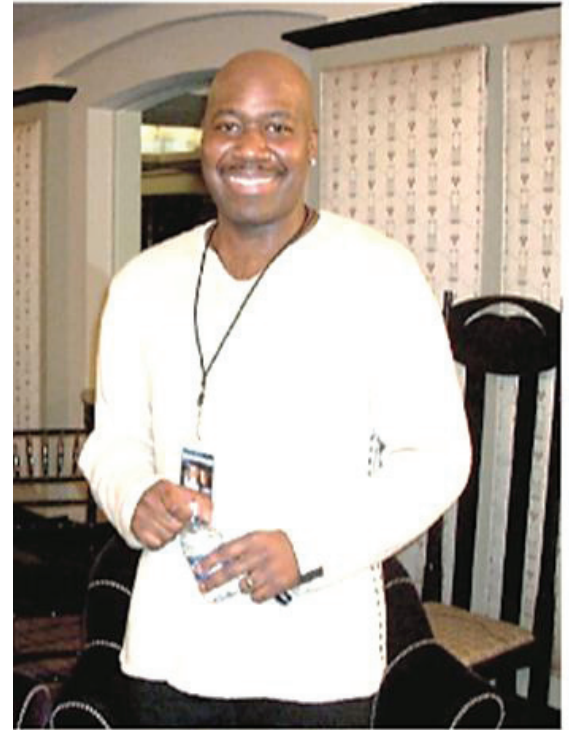
WD: “I studied upright bass and piano, but at the same time, I was terrible. I didn’t have the patience to really learn the instrument. But my God given instrument is something else. I’ve cultivated that. I attended Lander Sal High School; it was there I noticed kids were taking music seriously. They held recording sessions and would invite me down for the taping and I began to take it from there.”

AR: When did you make entertainment your career choice?

WD: “Around the time I was in high school.”

AR: Is this a true statement? ‘Because of your moral responsibilities to society and vocal achievements in the entertainment industry, you’ve been bestowed the title, ‘Prince of Sophisticated Soul?’ As a National Recording Artist please elaborate?”

WD: Once, I was interviewed by a college broadcast station and as the interview went on air, the interviewer said, “Hey man, you’re like the prince, The Prince of Sophisticated Soul”. And I said, “Why can’t I be the King?” His reply, Luther is the King. So, I graciously agreed that I’d be the “Prince of Sophisticated Soul.”



AR: Your latest CD entitled: ‘After Tonight’ has become your fastest selling album to date. How does that make you feel?

WD: This is great! It’s something that you dream of as a young person and to be able to make a career with this is unbelievable. Many folks that I’ve known have come and left with one or two CDs completed. Yet, to have 13 is a miracle. This is my 20th year as a solo artist. I’ve been performing a long time and supporting my family. It’s really a blessing.

AR: Earlier in April, you began a mission to get reconnected with y our friends and fan base. In light of your adversities and an abundance of tenacity, you’ve created an intimate platform for your listening audience to come together and ask questions directly to you. Tell us more.

WD: “Well to be more specific, in the latter part of 2006 and all of 2007, I was pretty much hospitalized. I contracted a disease called polymyositis (as he reaches out and touches me while jokingly saying...) now you’ve got it. (Smiling, continuing to speak) No, it’s a muscle disease. Quite a few people have it. It’s a form of muscular dystrophy. It is a dystrophy that comes upon you and your cells attack other cells, it basically removes your ability to do just about everything. So, for about seven or eight months, I couldn’t walk, move my arms or feed myself. But, through it all, I was able to finish this album. While in a wheelchair or in a hospital bed I began to think that the title of this new CD would be “Songs for the Black Chair.” What was most interesting was during these difficult times, my family and friends would take the microphone, place it in front of my face, put some headphones on my ears and I’d sing. Before finishing the CD, the song, “God is so Amazing” was recorded mainly with my mother in mind, she always wanted me to record a gospel song. And secondly, I thought it would be the last time I was going to be heard as a vocalist.” God has been very good; he’s bringing me back slowly. So, I said, when I am able to get back on my feet I was going to try to share words to inspire other people especially people of color to go to the doctor. I am a person who never went to the doctor in my life other than to see my children born, that’s it. When I finally went I was diagnosed with Polymyositis. I am sure there are a lot of people in this world that felt or feel the same way I once did. When I am able to do for others, I will bring increased awareness about going to the see a doctor.

AR: Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself or future projects?

WD: I am working on CD number 14; we’re currently in the process of pulling it together and hopefully it will be out April-May 2009.

BY: A. Reynolds

Photos: Detroit EM News



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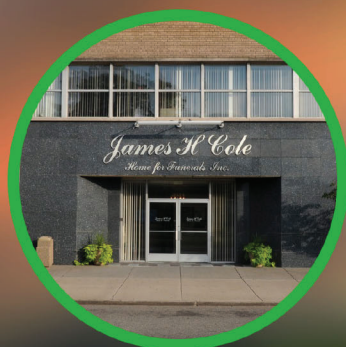
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