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April 4 - April 10, 2015 49th Year Volume 49 www.ladatanews.com


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Stevie Wonder

Songs in the Key of Life: An Exploration in Humanity through Music



After over five decades in the music business Stevie Wonder effortlessly showed what true showmanship looked like during his show here in New Orleans, aptly titled, Songs in the Key of Life.

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

Music for the Soul

Music at its best can touch the soul. Its words, melodies and harmonies can give voice to the essence of

the human experience. Last week New Orleans was the site of a truly historic moment that illustrates this point. Musical genius and legend Stevie Wonder came to town as one of his stops on the Songs in the Key of Life Tour. It was a show that was much more than simply a music concert; it was the equivalent of seeing a head of state or spiritual leader.

After over five decades in the music business Wonder effortlessly showed what true showmanship looked like. He began his set coming out accompanied by Singer India Arie, who accompanied him on a few songs during his three hour show. His set featured songs from his amazing 1976 Album, Songs in the Key of Life; one that many would call his magnum opus. It

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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featured hits such as Love In Need of Love Today, Sir Duke, I Wish, Pastime Paradise, As, Black Man, Isn't She Lovely, Another Star and many others.

A Vision of Life through Music

He is a man whose music defies categories and is truly a living legend. His music embodies the timelessness of many of his contemporaries such as the late greats: Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson, Curtis Mayfield, Bob Marley, Gil Scott-Heron and John Lennon. These individuals made music that still resonates today and Stevie Wonder is the embodiment of this time when relevant, intelligent music truly mattered.

His music is an exploration of the human experience. His songs are the soundtrack to life and are more than just personal musings but have a larger social meaning. His catalog is like a time machine that one can use to reflect on various aspects of life. When one looks at simply a few of the titles of his albums: Innervisions, Talking Book, Songs in the Key of Life, one can look at his work as an introspective look at the world through the eyes of a man who may not have sight, but has been gifted with insight that has given the world a vision of what the world is and could be if people reached their full human potential.

A Musical Messiah Bringing People Together through the Gift of Song

Stevie Wonder is a truly relevant artist who continues to be honored and revered by people spanning the globe. That was witnessed by the many different types of people who came out to see this musical genius at work. In his set he did not just play, but spoke about bringing people together. In a world today that is still filled with war, hate and misunderstanding this man who came of age during the Vietnam Conflict and Civil Rights Movement said, "It's time to bring people together regardless of race creed and religion." Continuing he said of religious intolerance, "It is not about the religion it is about the

relationship and if you have hate in your heart you are blocking your blessings."

When thinking of this statement, he embodies this sentiment in the song Black Man when he sings of people of different backgrounds who contributed to this nation and this world in the refrain, "This world was made for all men, all people." In fact, Wonder has throughout his musical life been a humanitarian being part of projects and using his art to give voice to social causes. In his years as an artist he has songs or collaborative projects (Living for the City, Master Blaster, Higher Ground, Ebony and Ivory, We Are the World, That's What Friends are For, Happy Birthday) covering a range of issues from racial injustice, economic inequality, famine in Africa, decolonization in the Third World, AIDS awareness and the push to make Dr. Martin Luther King Birthday a national holiday.

Songs in the Key of Life and Music Giving the Innervision to Reach Higher Ground

Throughout his illustrious career he has won 25 Grammy's and been honored the lifetime achievement award in addition, a concert held in his honor earlier this year with many contemporary artist performing his songs. He is a man who has won many honors and fans along his five decades in the music industry. Wonder has been given a range of awards for his music, and for his civil rights work, including induction into the Songwriters and the Rock and Roll Halls of Fame; gaining a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Civil Rights Museum, being named one of the United Nations Messengers of Peace, and earning the highest civilian honor the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2014. In his presentation speech before a crowd of world dignitaries, President Obama stated that Wonder's classic 1972 album Talking Book was the very first LP he purchased with his own

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First NBC Bank recognizes that a community based financial institution grows when it has professional and caring employees. We strive every day to supply the best banking services to each of our customers.

Majority local ownership allows us to cut through red tape and make decisions quickly when responding to our customers' financial needs. The Bank's flexible organizational structure affords our clients access to highly skilled and empowered bankers who are valued as trusted financial partners. And because we believe in open communication with customers, we will always encourage you to discuss your financial objectives and look for ways to implement them. First NBC Bank never stopped lending even during days of market instability. We're recognized as one of the top lending and service related banks throughout the Crescent City and the Metropolitan Area. So, if you want to work with a bank that makes client services its primary concern, you know who you can turn to-First NBC Bank.

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money and paid homage and respect to Wonder's legacy by saying, "Thanks to Stevie, all of us have been moved to higher ground."

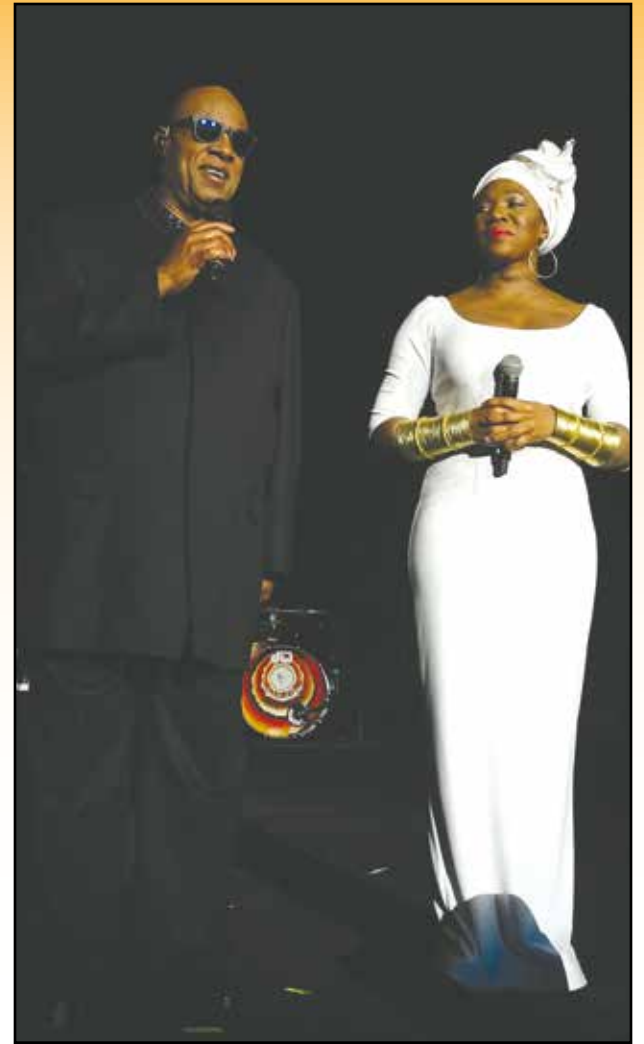
For many Stevie Wonder and his music are like a family member; someone whose been there for the many times in our lives. Whether it is the family reunion, the birth of a child, waking us up on Christmas morning, singing happy birthday or dancing to it at a party, or dancing a first dance at a wedding, it is his music that has been part of this soundtrack that covers the many facets of our lives. It is music to live and reflect on life unlike some of the music of today that in many instances is filled with vapid empty lyrics and music that is depraved and disposable. He took the audience on a timeless journey of life transcending labels of class, race, and religion and other things that separate people. Uniting them through the universal language of song; on this night in New Orleans that is what happened, people coming together at a concert that took them to "Higher Ground" giving them the "Innervisions" and giving them the "Songs in the Key of Life" that unlocks their unlimited potential and they can begin living life to the fullest."



The body of Wonder's work is an introspective look at the world through the eyes of a man who may not have sight, but has been gifted with insight.



Stevie Wonder's music is an exploration of the human experience.



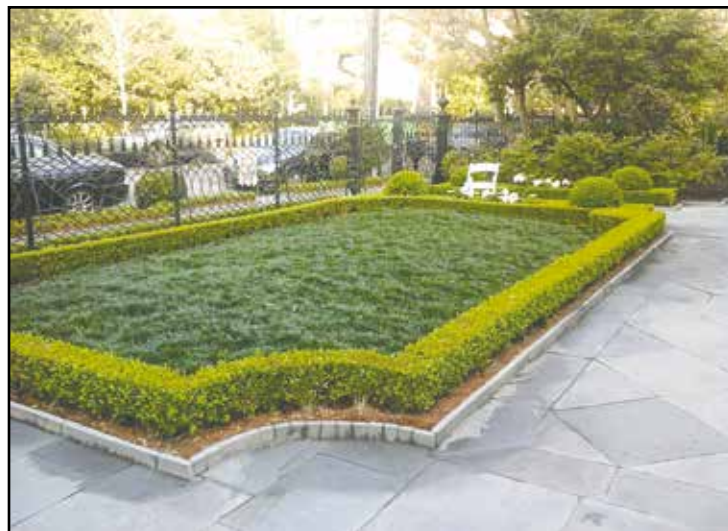
During his show Stevie Wonder was accompanied by India Arie, who sang several songs during his show in New Orleans.

How to Design an Amazing Garden on a Budget

By LMG Calla Victoria

Usually the only way to get an amazing look to your garden is to hire a landscape architect at a pretty penny, and let him or her do all the work. However there is another way to achieve your garden masterpiece. Take pen and paper, cameras, tablets, or cell phones in hand and visit amazing gardens on Secret Garden Tours and take notes and images. As most of the gardens featured in "secret garden tours" have been designed by the most renowned landscape architects, you can take those ideas home and use them in your garden. Scores of attendees were doing just that a few weeks ago at the 2015 Secret Garden Tour in New Orleans.

As a Master Gardener, I was invited to be a "garden expert" at one of the gardens on the tour. Tour guides brought the attendees to each garden on the tour. At each garden the "garden expert" would explain the planting techniques used in that garden, identify plant materials, and answer any questions. To my sur-



prise many of the attendees were from other countries including Canada, Japan, and France.

The garden that I worked with was the Spencer Garden in the lower garden district which was designed by noted landscape designer Rene Fransen. The lovely Victorian home stood behind a splendid wrought iron fence laced with climbing roses. The formal front yard features a lush dark green carpet of dwarf mondo grass bordered with

dwarf boxwood hedge for that formal parterre look. And up the front walkway were knot gardens edged with boxwoods and filled with variegated English ivy that skirted dwarf lilies. In front of the veranda was a tiered planting of shrubs that included azaleas and camellias. As you entered the side/shade yard there was a privacy hedge of confederate/star jasmine with a repetition of Louisiana irises along the fence. The backyard was cozy with a

lovely pool and crepe myrtles with amazing petrified trunks, a bathroom, and outdoor kitchen. Between the pool and the back fence was a bank of Japanese blueberry trees that were underplanted with hydrangeas and plumbago.

Then off to the left of the outdoor kitchen was the service yard which backed up to the neighbors a large concrete building. The otherwise intrusive structure looked like a beautiful living wall of green as it was masked beautifully with fig vines.

I loved this garden because so many of the design principles were present. There was Rhythm created by multiple plantings of the same plant materials, as with the climbing rose bushes on the gate, the Louisiana irises along the jasmine hedge; and the bank of Japanese blueberry trees. Entry was obvious with the majestic tall wrought iron gate. Mystery was created as you rounded the veranda on the pathway leading to the side garden. Each garden had its own focal point, the mondo parterre in the formal front

yard. Then there was more dwarf mondo grass in an oval enclosure in the side yard which drew your eyes, but did not obstruct the pool and fountain which are definitely the focal point of the back yard, then finally the fig vine was the focal point of the service yard. Framing the view was achieved in the side yard as Japanese maples flanked each side of the walkway as you neared the pool area. Texture and pattern were obvious with the knot garden and the tiered plants of shrubs.

Do not miss the next secret garden tour in your area because you can gather a wealth of garden design information. Most secret garden tours are fundraisers for worthy causes so if you cannot afford the price of the ticket to the tour please consider volunteering.

Check out my "Gardening tip of the Week" at www.thegardendiva.com.

Remember, never get too busy to stop and smell the beautiful flowers!

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Annual Neighborhood Development Foundation House Party

Photos by Glenn Summers

It is well known as one of the premier events of the year: The Neighborhood Development Foundation (NDF) House Party fundraiser.

House Party is the once a year fundraiser for NDF which is the leading organization that teaches homeownership education. NDF is known nationally as one of New Orleans' greatest success stories and the key to a rewarding and productive life for many low to moderate income families. Since 1986, NDF has assisted almost 4,000 residents move from renting to homeownership.

"Building assets over a lifetime that will enable you to leave an inheritance to your children. This is a dream for many working families. It's a dream that NDF has helped to make a reality for thousands of families throughout the greater New Orleans area. Renters become homeowners, landlords, developers, and investors in our community," says NDF CEO Fred Johnson.

This year's House Party theme was "Faces of Affordability." The Patron Party was held 6:30 p.m. Saturday, March 28, 2015 in First NBC Bank's 3rd floor Board Room 210 Baronne Street. The Gala followed downstairs in its historic main office lobby at 7:30 p.m.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Young, Gifted, Black and Abused



By **Walter Fields**
NNPA Columnist

In the course of one week we witnessed the burden of being young, gifted and Black.

First, the Little League baseball Phenom Mo'ne Davis was insulted by a White college baseball player who called the abundantly talented young girl a 'slut' in a Tweet in response to news that Disney was planning to make a movie about her incredible rise to fame. The player, Joey Casselberry, quickly retracted the tweet in the face of a wave of criticism in cyberspace but was promptly dismissed by the Bloomsburg University team.

Then there were the toxic tweets from Jenna and Jacque Huggins, the daughters of West Virginia head basketball coach Bob Huggins, calling Maryland basketball player Dez

Wells a rapist. The West Virginia team defeated Maryland in an early round of the NCAA championship tournament. The Terrapins star guard had been kicked off the Xavier University team in 2012 after being accused of sexual assault. A grand jury decided charges against Wells were not warranted and he later settled a lawsuit he brought against Xavier.

Not far from the Morgantown campus of the University of West Virginia and College Park home of the University of Maryland, a young, Black University of Virginia undergraduate student was accosted by police. Martese Johnson had his face bashed into the pavement and bloodied by Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) agents outside a pub near the UVA campus. The episode was captured on videotape. Johnson had proper ID and was not resisting arrest when the ABC agents pummeled him, causing injuries that required 10 stitches in his head.

What these three incidents have in common is obvious – Mo'ne Davis, Dez Wells and Martese Johnson are all young and Black. Lurking just beyond the obvious tie is

the quality of their blackness – they are all gifted and confident in their identities. It seems in 21st century America to be young, gifted and Black is now a crime; an offense against society's typecasting of Black youth as violent, unintelligent and worthless.

The intensity of these assaults – oral and physical – is sharpened by decades of conditioned hate, forged by theories of Black inferiority and White supremacy. The venomous words electronically spat upon Davis and Wells, and the force leveled upon Martese Johnson, are simply the byproducts of the permissiveness of racism in our nation.

It is the success of Davis, Wells and Johnson that defies and counters the mythology of Black depravity. And it is success that triggers the backlash, awakens the racist beast and brings to the surface sentiments that heretofore might have only been expressed in private conversations. By succeeding these young people frustrate those who harbor bias and leave them little room to fully exercise their demons. For some, touch pad keystrokes become a potent weapon to voice hatred

from afar; sort of the lazy man's racism that tempers it but still empowers the perpetrator. The police involved in the micro-aggression at the University of Virginia? They were acting under the assumption of "Black threat" and sending a message in the process.

This is the cruel joke played upon Black youth in America. The public message communicated to young Black women and men is to pursue excellence and rise above challenges, and be exemplary in their civic lives. That message is countered by the aural and visual assault upon their sensibilities that reduces them to thugged out and hyper-sexualized caricatures. When young Blacks rise above this stereotyping, they are then reduced to racial objects, ridiculed for being audacious in their success.

Mo'ne Davis was a "slut" in the eyes of a young White male because he believes her success is undeserving of the attention it is receiving. The privileged White daughters of a basketball coach of a major university made the determination a grand jury could not, on a charge a university could not prove and was forced to reach settlement with the accused.

Still, Dez Wells is branded a rapist because he excelled on the basketball court. Martese Johnson was just another young Black guy, a human punching bag for police who could casually dismiss the thought that they were bloodying a student enrolled in the nearby prestigious university, or more importantly, a human being and someone's son.

Collectively, these incidents bring into sharper focus the racist rants of former University of Oklahoma SAE fraternity members in that now infamous videotape. This is the world in which young Black Americans live. It is a sobering reality that a generation that many hoped would truly be post-racial (as if that will ever be the case) is more deeply entrenched in racism than the prior generation. And institutional racism has a vice grip upon young Blacks that is more consequential than white mobs of decades past.

It's enough to make me take a trip to the nearest Starbucks. I'll take a latte with some truth talk.

Walter Fields is Executive Editor of NorthStarNews.com.

Keisha Knight Pulliam Helping Our Youth through Kamp Kizzy



Keisha Knight Pulliam
Guest Columnist

I think every person that walks the face of the earth has a Calling and Passion that they are meant to maximize to make our world a better place. For me, my Passion and Calling comes through acting, but it also shows up through my non-profit Kamp Kizzy.

Kamp Kizzy gives young

people the opportunity to learn, share, explore and expand their horizons through workshops, candid discussions and the opportunity to meet and "pick" the brains of some of the top individuals in their given professions. Now that we have been doing Kamp Kizzy for nearly a decade now, there are some undeniable Truths that have been reinforced through this work.

The first Truth is that when children are exposed to careers, opportunities and people that inspire, they become more determined about pursuing their Life's work. The second great Truth that has been cemented through this work is that education is the great equalizer for

children who might come from underserved communities and cities and because the second Truth is so near and dear to my heart, I have joined forces with a great organization, American Federation for Children, and its mission is to make sure that all children have access to a quality education.

An unfortunate reality for far too many families in our great country is that they are limited in their ability to access the best education for their children. Oftentimes, these barriers are due to lack of financial resources or their zip code and/or address is in a part of town that relegates them to inferior educational opportunities.

Our country is founded and thrives on opportunity and the

mere fact that so many of our children are not getting the educational opportunities that they so richly deserve is one of the reasons that I unabashedly lend my name and voice to the issue of school choice.

Disproportionately, children of color and lesser financial means are the ones who are subjected to poor schools that have been underperforming for decades and giving their families more quality options when it comes to their children's education is one of the ways that we can proactively solve this mammoth of an issue.

Finally, I just want to explicitly and emphatically state that, for me, the issue of school choice is about children. It is not about political

party, affiliation or any other motive that does not derive itself from doing what is best for our children. I will humbly ask that you, like I, add your voice and support to American Federation for Children and the work that it continues to do for our children especially those who are low-income and working-class and deserving the opportunity to access great schools.

For more information on American Federation for Children, please visit...

www.federationforchildren.org or www.championsforchoice.com

Keisha Knight Pulliam is the founder of the Kamp Kizzy Foundation and a stage and screen actress. For more information visit www.kampkizzy.org.

Senator Morrell Invites You to Town Hall

Meetings Starting April 6

State Senator JP Morrell announced that he will be hosting Town Hall meetings in each parish of Louisiana Senate District 3 in preparation for the upcoming legislative session. Morrell will present his legislative agenda and solicit guidance from constituents. State agencies are also invited to participate to address constituent concerns.

"Government works best when everyone is at the table. I hope all of District 3 will attend and share their priorities with me so that I can better represent them in Baton Rouge," said Morrell.

Some distinctive components of Morrell's legislative agenda that will be presented are proposals for tougher laws against sexual assaults, programs for improved sexual education, policies for equal pay for women, expanding Medicaid in Louisiana, and responsible tax credit reform.



State Senator JP Morrell, Louisiana Senate District 3

TOWN HALL SCHEDULE

Jefferson Parish

Monday, April 6, 2015 5:30 pm

West Jeff Medical Center

Fonseca Auditorium

1101 Medical Center Boulevard

Marrero, Louisiana 70072

Morrell will be joined by State Representatives Robert Billiot and Bryan Adams

St. Bernard Parish

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

5:30 pm

St. Bernard Port

100 Port Blvd., 2nd floor

Chalmette, Louisiana 70043

Morrell will be joined by State Representative Ray Garofalo

Orleans Parish

Thursday, April 9, 2015

5:30 pm

Holy Cross School Gymnasium

5500 Paris Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70122

Morrell will be joined by State Representative Joseph Bouie

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Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

About the Job

Data News Weekly Newspaper is the leading African American media company in New Orleans, publishing a weekly newspaper. Additionally, its website under ladatanews.com is the most read Black website in the region.

We are currently seeking a strong leader to proactively manage broad aspects of the advertising division. You will be working in a positive team-oriented atmosphere which has a modern press, leading website and award-winning newspaper.

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- Develop a team sales atmosphere

Our ideal candidate will possess the following education, skills and experience:

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- Team player and leader
- Understanding of Analytics and ad serving technology
- Strong motivational skills
- Recruit talent

Our company provides a competitive salary, and an environment that encourages personal and professional growth. We are an equal opportunity employer.

If you are interested in a rewarding career, email a cover letter and resume to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net or mail to: Data News Weekly, c/o Terry Jones, Publisher, 3501 Napoleon Avenue, New Orleans LA 70125

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