

Soultracks.com Awards 2007



Soultracks.com took their online poll of stunning but underrated soulstars offline to Detroit's Cobo Hall for an evening of honors and performance on a cold and wintry November 16th that had all of winter's feeling but no snow. A cadre of soul bloggers, musicians, soul fans and their friends took in the grassroots-efforted affair inside the venue's Riverview Ballroom overlooking the murky water shared by Michigan and Canada. Jodine of [Jodine's corner](#) hosted the event and blessed the night with David Bowie's quote that "Major labels will be in shambles in the next ten years." She left out part of the quote where he also says that "touring will be the only unique situation left."

It is the constant travels of Eric Roberson, Maya Azucena, Maysa Leak, Phil Perry and a chain of other independent soul artists that have allowed them to have careers outside the shareholder-driven worlds of Viacom, Universal, Sony Bmg, Warner and EMI. The readers of Soultracks.com did not pick their winners from the nationalized playlists of terrestrial radio but the niche economies of online music.

For the price of the ticket spectators saw Rahsaan Patterson sing "Stop Breaking My Heart" from the Album of the Year winner *Wines and Spirits*. Patterson's unplanned but professional appearance benefitted from sassy ad-libs with one of the house band's polished back-up singers. Russell Thompkins Jr., the famous lead-singing falsetto of The Stylistics received a lifetime achievement award and a tribute from Maysa Leak and Phil Perry. Leak's deep tone that has influenced many critics to compare her sound to the solumn sexiness of Sade sang a careful reedition of "Betcha By Golly Wow." But it was Phil Perry's fire-starting version of "Stop,

Look, Listen” that made the audience stand-up, clap and wonder for the millionth time why larger American audiences have not followed him since his Billboard-charting cover of Aretha’s “Call Me.” Maya Azucena who has caught the spirit with the experimental funk jazz of Burnt Sugar in the past sang her acoustic single “Junkyard Jewell” never flinching when the mic died. Eric Roberson, Kloud 9, Gordon Chambers and El Renee also made the stage and gave their best. Kickmag spoke with some of the artists that night to ask them about what the night felt like for them and what was going on with their careers.

Maysa

How does it feel to win female vocalist of the year?

Unbelievable, it’s just a beautiful surprising feeling. It’s a people’s choice award it means the people voted for me so I must be doing something right.

The last couple of albums have been classic songs, what made you want to do more covers?

The record company hired me and I love these songs, I grew-up on these songs it was an honor to sing them.

Do you have a favorite song from the latest collection [Feel The Fire](#)?

“Happy Feeling.”

Any wishlist of who you would like to work with?

Um Frank Mccomb, Eric Roberson and I would really like to work with Chaka Khan I would like her to produce me.

Gordon Chambers

You are a known songwriter, when you write do you ever have anyone particular in mind or does it just flow through you?

Yes I mean I can do it when I write for an artist specifically

or I can just write generally it doesn't make a difference.

How does it feel to be nominated tonight?

It was wonderful it was a wonderful experience to have my hard work be acknowledged and my appearance.

As someone who works behind the scenes a lot and you are an independent artist. How do you feel about file-sharing and webcasting?

It's hurtful and it's helpful. Its helpful as a promotional vehicle it's hurtful because it makes things available for free. It's about balance and I think that right now the technology will find a way to make it fair and equitable to all. But it does make things like youtube gives independent artists more of a visual presence with our sound. In our instance it is helpful.

That was a nice song you did with El Renee we know you did it originally with Ledisi and you have worked with a lot of people. Are there any people on your wishlist?

Oh yeah, I'd love to work with Alicia Keys I'd love to work with Mary J.Blige I'd love to work with Seal, I'd love to work with Sting, I'd love to work with Prince I'd love to work with Stevie Wonder, Celine Dion tons of artists to work with neverending.

You've written some classic songs yourself such as Anita Baker's "I Apologize" and Angie Stones' "No More Rain" among others. Are there any songs out there that you wished you wrote?

Oh yeah there's tons of songs I wished I wrote. I love Eric Roberson's "Couldn't Hear Me" I love that. When I first got that CD I listened to that song 15 times in a row I swear to you in a row because it encapsulated so many things I've thought and gone through in relationships. Yeah a great song

is a great song whenever you hear a great song you say 'I wish I wrote that.'

So what's next I know we are still listening to [Love Stories](#)?

Next I am going to release a live album. I'm in the studio with Aretha Franklin right now her album is about to drop next year. I have a cut on Angie Stone's album that just came out that debuted at number 1. And I have been working with a young artist on Def Jam called Karina Pasian I'm really excited about she is a young prodigy genius. She's 16 and plays the piano and speaks 5 languages amazing.

Where is she from?

She's from New York from the um Spanish Harlem, Washington Heights she's Dominican.

A lot of people don't know you were on Being Bobby Brown how was that? did it raise your profile?

Yeah a lot of people saw my face. I don't know what people thought of Bobby or thought of the show but even when I was in other countries people would say 'I saw your face' Anything you can have to have your face out there and Bobby and Whitney have always been very good to me and I had absolutely no problem supporting one of their ventures because they supported mine.

Is there anything else you want to add?

The website is www.gordonchambers.com .

Russell Thompkins Jr.

How does it feel to get this Lifetime Achievement Awards?

It feels very fantastic because this is the first time something like this has ever happened in my life. I've gotten awards before I've been in situations like this but never at

this time in my life.

Did it catch you by surprise?

No it didn't catch me by surprise but I am very honored tremendously.

What did you think of the tribute given to you tonight?

Well I'm a looooong time great fan of Phil Perry. He is one of the most phenomenal vocalists I ever heard in my life. The lady who came and sang after him was very great too. Maysa she sang the song really really nice. But Phil is just one of a kind.

How does it feel to hear your influence travel through artists even today?

I've been around a long time and I have been in situations where people have sang my music before to hear my influence in it. But Phil did not my song with my influence he did it the way he wanted to. He is a seasoned artist and has been around as long as I have. Younger people who do my music I can hear when they are growing and what type of artist they are to take from the old to give to the new.

What made you do this latest project [The Three Tenors](#)?

This idea has been thrown around for a long time but we just didn't know which tenors were gonna do it. William Harwick is one of the biggest influences in my musical career. When I was 17-years old the first TV program I did I was in high school "La La Means I Love You" after William Hart had sang that. And Ted Mills I didn't know Ted as a singer when I first met him he was a songwriter he wrote three songs for me that I never got a chance to record but they were so wonderful that I never forgot them. So both of them have been a great influence on my career and my life.

Q.Are you going to tour that album?

No, I'm working with my group [The Stylistics](#) right now doing music that I made and trying to keep that going but I have a solo CD that I'm working on right now. And we're going into the studio to record the new Stylistics a DVD already made and a CD of the new Stylistics coming out.

Is that old or new footage?

It's only a couple of months old we did it with the Myrtle Beach Symphony

What do you think of contemporary soul music?

The soul music of today that I heard tonight had the influence of the older music. Some soul music that is out right now might be a little bit to the hip-hop side. I don't hate hip-hop but I don't understand hip-hop. It goes a little too much to the hip-hop side my ears don't listen as well as it does when it stays more to the hip-hop side.