

# Whitney Houston, Diana Ross, Rod Stewart and Shakira to Headline the Tobago Jazz Festival



Los Angeles, CA – From April 25 through April 27, 2008 the picturesque fishing village of Plymouth, Tobago will transform into what Forbes Traveler has noted as “one of the world’s coolest music festivals.” For these three glorious days, jet setters, international partygoers and music lovers from around the world will transcend upon the Caribbean island to revel in the melodious sounds of root music, covering the genres of soul, funk, blues, reggae and yes, jazz! Sweltering days and balmy nights will make for a true tropical paradise as sun, sand and song coalesce and island fever rocks the globe

Barrett LaRoda, CEO of the LaRoda Group will once again produce the Plymouth Jazz Festival Tobago, in conjunction with executive producer, Anthony Maharaj, CEO of Music Radio 97, Ebony 104, Radio 90.5 and ieTV Channel 1. The fourth annual celebration, sponsored by CL Financial, parent company of Angostura 1919, Clico and CIB, boasts legendary icons Whitney Houston, Diana Ross, Rod Stewart and Shakira as headliners. Smokey Robinson, Peabo Bryson, James Ingram, En Vogue, and Steel Pulse are also scheduled to partake in the festivities. Ricky Minor will serve as musical producer.

LaRoda has worked tirelessly for several years now to position the Plymouth Jazz Festival Tobago as the crÃ“me de la crÃ“me

of music festivals, diligently collaborating with the Tobago House of Assembly. Past festivals have successfully paved the way having hosted Stevie Wonder, Sting, Sir Elton John, Sean Puffy Combs, Gladys Knight, Earth, Wind & Fire, Mary J. Blige, Natalie Cole, Babyface and LL Cool J to name a few.

“We have worked tirelessly in taking this year’s festival to the next level,” offers CL Financial’s chairman, Lawrence Duprey. “Our primary goal has always been to brand the island as the tourism capital of the Caribbean.”

“The island’s white sand beaches are the perfect backdrop for three days of unforgettable entertainment,” adds LaRoda. “It is the most unbelievable experience. The concerts just keep getting bigger and better. We are already planning for our fifth anniversary celebration and it is going to be simply mind blowing!”

The Plymouth Jazz Festival Tobago is marketed throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, North America and the Caribbean. For more information and details about the festival, log on to [www.tobagojazzfest.com](http://www.tobagojazzfest.com).

As the CEO of the LaRoda Group ([www.laroda.com](http://www.laroda.com)), Barrett LaRoda is an entertainment industry veteran and producer of worldwide music events. His roster includes Stevie Wonder, rap artist Doug E. Fresh, saxophonist Najee, Sammy Davis Jr. Enterprises, Inc., the Plymouth Jazz Festival Tobago and the Nigerian ThisDay Music Fest. A visionary of sorts, LaRoda has accomplished many firsts in his career, including the first Sammy Davis Jr. branded on-line casino on the internet, and being the first to bring Sean Puffy Combs to Nigeria, Africa to perform !

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# Dianne Reeves On The Jools Holland Show

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## Four Time Grammy Winning Jazz Diva, Dianne Reeves, Releases Stunning Set Of “New” Standards April 15 With When You Know



Dianne Reeves, the preeminent jazz vocalist the New York Times described as, “The only jazz singer with a voice big enough to rival Sarah Vaughan’s,” is about to release a gorgeous album of songs celebrating the different stages of love in a woman’s life. When You Know, coming out on Blue Note Records April 15, showcases Reeves’ alternately honey velvet and soaring voice in her own interpretation of “new” standards from The Temptations to Minnie Ripperton to Shawn Colvin. The four-time Grammy winner, and the only singer to win the vocal category for three consecutive recordings in any singing category, won a whole new legion of fans in recent years with her prominent onscreen role in the film “Good Night, And Good Luck.” Her last Grammy was for this soundtrack.

Reeves inspiration for When You Know came from an unexpected place. “There is a Gustav Klimt painting I had seen at the

Belvedere in Vienna of a young woman moving through life. I remember loving the various depictions of the phases of her life from innocence to increasing maturity. In a similar way, this album progresses through songs which celebrate different phases of love, in much the same way our notions of love change as we move through time." The songs ultimately chose themselves, she said, ranging from her youthful and dreamy interpretation of the Temptations' "Just My Imagination" to the seasoned perspective of the Cy Coleman/Peggy Lee classic "I'm In Love Again."

"Dreamy is right," emphasized Reeves. "It's that time in high school when you're looking at that cute guy on the other side of the classroom, lost in the daydreams of a life together." She adds, "As you grow older, you begin to question what love really is and your perspective takes in the nuances of a more mature love." The track, "Over The Weekend," first sung by Mabel Mercer and then Nancy Wilson – the latter encouraged Dianne to record it – reflects the loneliness Reeves has, herself, experienced in a life on the road, while the groove infused "Midnight Sun" taps into the magic of love, Dianne's voice reminiscent of the best of Ella.

The album concludes with Reeves' sole original offering, honoring where love for her begins – her 83-year old mother, Vada. "Today Will Be a Good Day," is a rollicking blues track, delivered with a heap of bounce and boogie. Despite her battle with breast cancer and emphysema, Vada is a sparkplug of life and, says Reeves, "My biggest inspiration. If you don't call her by 8:30 a.m., you're not going to catch her. She's so independent yet so giving—a wonderful example of living in grace." The philosophy of life that has carried Vada through her health challenges with her zest for living intact is best summed up in her own words: 'I don't entertain illness, depression or boredom. I may feel them sometimes, but I don't entertain them!' The lyrics to "Today Will Be A Good Day" are her mother's words of wisdom and how she lives her life.

When You Know emerged following a period of intense touring for Reeves. Creatively revitalized during a break at home in Denver, she suddenly announced a desire to get into the studio right away, teaming once again with producer George Duke (Natalie Cole, Anita Baker), Reeves' cousin and producer of two of her Grammy-winning albums: 2001's *In the Moment* and 2002's *The Calling*.

The vocal textures and colors Reeves' employs on this album can be attributed to having performed in an unusual musical context over the past year: two guitars and voice, a setting which enabled her to discover new ways for her voice to both soar and seduce. Guitar masters Russell Malone and Romero Lubambo joined Reeves for the tour and the result was magical. The 25-date European "Strings Attached" tour is still being talked about. In addition to Lubambo and Malone, joining Reeves on *When You Know* are a cast of familiar faces from past albums, including pianist Billy Childs and saxophonist Steve Wilson as well as new collaborators pianist Geoffrey Keezer and drummer Antonio Sanchez. Veterans of Reeves' bands who appear include bassists Reuben Rogers and Reginald Veal and drummer Greg Hutchinson.

Vanity Fair has said Dianne Reeves demonstrates, "...terrific jazz stylings" and USA Today called her "The celebrated jazz diva..." but perhaps Essence said it best, when it described, ""Dianne Reeves proves she's still a premier mistress of jazz..." *When You Know*, you know.

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## **Sammy Davis Jr. Enterprises,**

# **Inc. Files Lawsuit Against Mrs. Sammy Altovise Davis, Jr.**



Los Angeles, CA – In response to a lawsuit filed in Dallas last month by Mrs. Sammy Altovise Davis, Jr., Sammy Davis, Jr. Enterprises, Inc., The LaRoda Group, Barrett LaRoda and Anthony Francis have filed their own lawsuit against Mrs. Sammy Altovise Davis Jr. and Burt Boyar, et. al., in the United States District Court in the Central District of California ( Case No. CV08-00411).

A sad turn of events, it all began when Barrett LaRoda was introduced to Mrs. Altovise Davis by Anthony Francis back in 2000. The image and celebrity value of her husband's estate had greatly diminished, and Francis thought LaRoda might be able help. A once iconic entertainment figure, Sammy Davis Jr. had achieved international star power and was a civil rights trailblazer during his lifetime. But severe mismanagement was fading his institutional memory and his name value drew little branding power and less income.

LaRoda recognized this state of affairs as not only a tremendous tragedy that had befallen Mrs. Davis but also a loss to the collective memory of not only Black Americans but America at large. As the CEO of the LaRoda Group ([www.LaRoda.com](http://www.LaRoda.com) ), Barrett LaRoda is an entertainment industry veteran and producer of worldwide music events. His roster includes Stevie Wonder, rap artist Doug E. Fresh, saxophonist Najee and the Tobago Jazz Festival. He therefore began to utilize his expertise, business savvy and industry contacts to effect the course of history and salvage the legacy of one the

world's greatest entertainers. Taking Mrs. Davis under his wing and into his home even, they eventually established Sammy Davis Jr. Enterprises, Inc.

LaRoda's successful efforts on behalf of Sammy Davis, Jr. include a live stage show currently running in all of the casinos on the life of Sammy Davis, Jr.; the first branded on-line casino on the internet, the first of its kind in history; and most recently, the inclusion of Sammy Davis, Jr. in a national Applebee's commercial.

Matters took a turn for the worse after negotiations with a major studio regarding the life story of Sammy Davis Jr., that included Jane and Burt Boyar, co-writers of the autobiographies *Yes I Can* and *Why Me?* hit a road block.

It is LaRoda's belief that Mrs. Davis is being unwisely counseled. Cites LaRoda, "The entire situation saddens me to no end. As African Americans, it is crucial that we uphold the integrity of our heroes and maintain control of how our history is told. Mrs. Davis is like a mother to me. It is heartbreaking that she has let others come between us."

A statement issued by Mr. LaRoda's attorneys, Jay M. Coggan, Esquire, Los Angeles and David H. Harper, Esquire, Dallas, reads, "There are so many in the entertainment industry as well as mutual close friends and family members, who can attest to the fact that over the years, Mr. LaRoda and Mr. Francis have provided for Althea Davis financially and emotionally, in an effort to bring resources and to bring stability to her life. It saddens both Mr. LaRoda and Mr. Francis to think that as they are about to realize all of their collective objectives and goals with Mrs. Davis, namely, producing a biopic on the life and times of Sammy Davis, Jr., that Mrs. Davis has allowed strangers to come between them."

"As an entertainment industry executive for over 20 years, Mr. LaRoda has represented many entertainers. He has significant

expertise in the area of intellectual property licensing. He has never been accused of financial mismanagement nor has ever been accused of misrepresenting his credentials or qualifications.”

“Clearly, Mr. LaRoda and Mr. Francis expected much more from Mrs. Davis. They sincerely love her, and hope that together, they can all put this behind them, and proceed to preserve and celebrate the legacy of a legend, Sammy Davis, Jr.”