



◀ A classic soul and rhythm and blues singer/songwriter, Liv Warfield says she kept her voice a secret for 20 years, but the Portland artist is now getting national exposure with a new album and profile on the Black Entertainment Network cable jazz channel.

PHOTO BY SEAN O'CONNOR/
THE PORTLAND
OBSERVER

Liv Warfield's Straight Up Soul

continued ▲ from Front

at all. My good friend Todd at the Ambassador used to dress me up in all sorts of characters, and that gave me confidence to own my voice. For a long time I knew I could sing, but I couldn't show it."

From one teacher to the next

It was during her karaoke days Warfield came into contact with Linda Hornbuckle, a homegrown Portland blues and soul singer/songwriter.

Now like a family member, Warfield first became acquainted with Hornbuckle from her seat in the back of the Candlelight Café and Bar.

"She taught me presence,"

Warfield said. "How to use my soul, how not to be afraid to be vulnerable on stage."

For Warfield to embrace success with style and ease, it took many puzzle pieces falling into place.

But those pieces never rain from the sky atop silver platters, and Warfield doesn't advance too far in her story before recalling tribulations far beyond overcoming a fear of stage presence.

"Linda encouraged me to do my own thing and put myself out there," she said. "And it's hard, especially in a town of rock."

Hornbuckle is a part of the tight knit soul community her young protégé sees in an older Portland

generation. Their music, nurtured by artists like Andy Stokes and the cult favorite band Pleasure, is something she wants to see from today's R&B musicians.

"It would be nice for young people in Portland to get together," she said. "I sought out the guys in my band. I think R&B soul singers should do that instead of waiting for them to come to you."

Warfield's performance and television taping presented an opportunity for a bright future beyond Oregon. If 2007 brings the momentum she and the band have worked hard to achieve, aspiring R&B singers may find in her the inspiration to jumpstart a new Portland soul scene.

'Tis the Season for Depression

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rockets. January is the month that has the highest successful and attempted suicide rates in the nation.

"We see the crisis hotlines peak massively right after the New Year's," says Ozer.

Harris S. Matarazzo is a self-employed local attorney that specializes in mental health issues. He agrees that not only do financial restraints, over-commercialization, personal loss and other variables increase depression symptoms at this time of year, but if someone is prone to depression the holidays can significantly magnify the effect.

"Many people think that if someone has depression that they can just snap out of it and there is a huge stigma attached to suffering from it," says Matarazzo. "Some of my clients would rather admit to having HIV than admit that they suffer from depression."

Alcohol, narcotics and excessive eating also greatly contribute to the common symptoms of depression sufferers.

"Adding a depressant or a stimulant into a depressive equation only makes the symptoms increase," says Matarazzo. "And overeating makes people depressed and generally feel physically terrible as well."

Ironically, the most common resolution for New Year's is to lose weight, while resolutions to stop drinking or discontinue drug use are among the top 10.

"It's not as easy to keep resolutions as it is to say you'll keep them," says Ozer. "It helps if people allow themselves to accept the fact that they may not be able to achieve goals that they may have planned on."

Ozer says that excessive drinking and eating often mask a

person's holiday blues, and as the New Year comes and passes many people find it difficult to stop self-medicating which can lead to suicidal thoughts and intense depression.

It's common for people to not realize that they are suffering from holiday depression symptoms and struggle to decide if it's simply the holiday blues or if they are suffering from a dangerous mood change.

Matarazzo runs into many people who have mood shifts during the winter months. "If someone is feeling down but it is not affecting their sleep, work or general day to day life then it's probably not that severe. However, if they think something is seriously wrong then they should take action," he says.

People should attempt to recognize the warning signs of severe depression.

"When patients describe how they are feeling they usually choose really vague or general words to express their emotions," says Ozer. "People mostly choose to use words like sadness, loneliness, sleeplessness, exhaustion and lack of appetite."

The most common symptoms of depression are energy loss, sleeplessness, lack of appetite and a general feeling of unhappiness.

He says one in five people will suffer from major depression at least once in their life. Oregon and the Pacific Northwest have a higher depression rate than other parts of the country. Some suspect it's due to the large amount of darkness and rain during the winter months.

There are warning signs for people that are more susceptible to dangerous depression such as those that may be isolated, have no family, have suffered from a traumatic event or have mental

health problems.

Ozer recommends to people who think they may be suffering from depression to consult a doctor who can evaluate and treat the symptoms. Emergency crisis hotlines are also available for people who need immediate help.

Crisis counselors make a plan for the callers that can involve an immediate intervention or introduction of available services that offer help.

Multnomah County crisis line is 503-988-4888 and the Washington County crisis line is 503-291-9111. Both are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Autistic Boy Tasered

Police accused of brutality

A local pastor is accusing Portland police of brutality by firing four tasers at her great grandson who is diagnosed with autism.

Sir. J. Millage, 15, the African-American great-grandson of Pastor Mary Overstreet-Smith, was determined a threat by police officers when he was spotted wandering around in the middle of the night Dec. 5, barefoot and shirtless.

Overstreet-Smith said because of his autism, Millage has a serious mental disability. He can hardly talk and has the mind of a 2-year-old.

Officer Andrew Griggs said it was the "large tan item," possibly a large piece of metal, that Millage was holding, and his "fixed gaze" that led him to fire the taser.

When he dropped to the ground after the first taser hit his body and started screaming, police said they interpreted his cries as anger rather than pain. When Millage refused to roll onto his stomach, they fired again.

Baffled by his ability to take the shots, the officer kept shooting — assuming the boy was "very high on drugs or possessed an extremely high pain tolerance."

A backup officer, Michael Chapman then struck him six times with his baton on his right leg and right arm, police said.

Millage was taken to Adventist Medical Center where he was released.



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