

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Dynamic Voice that Drove Motown Classics

Remembering Four Tops Frontman Levi Stubbs

(AP) -- Four Tops frontman Levi Stubbs, whose dynamic and emotive voice drove such Motown classics as "Reach Out (I'll Be There)" and "Baby I Need Your Loving," is being remembered after his death Friday at the age of 72.

With Stubbs in the lead, the Four Tops sold millions of records and performed for more than four decades without a change in personnel.

"Levi Stubbs was one of the great voices of all times," former Motown labelmate Smokey Robinson said. "He was very near and dear to my heart. He was my friend and my brother, I miss him. God bless his family and comfort them."

The Four Tops began singing together in 1953 under the name the Four Aims and signed a deal with Chess Records. They later changed their names to the Four Tops to avoid being confused with the Ames Brothers.

They also recorded for Red Top, Riverside and Columbia Records and toured supper clubs.

The Four Tops signed with Motown Records in 1963 and produced 20 Top-40 hits over the next 10 years, making music history with the other acts in Berry Gordy's Motown stable.

"It is not only a tremendous personal loss for me, but for the Motown family, and people all over the world who were touched

by his rare voice and remarkable spirit," Gordy said. "Levi was the greatest interpreter of songs I've

ever heard."

When he and others at Motown first heard "Baby I Need Your Loving," Gordy remembered: "Levi's voice exploded in

the room and went straight for our hearts. We all knew it was a hit, hands down."

Their biggest hits were recorded between 1964 and 1967 with the in-house songwriting and production team of Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier and Eddie Holland. Both 1965's "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)" and 1966's "Reach Out" went to No. 1 on the Billboard pop chart.

Other hits included "Shake Me, Wake Me" (1966), "Bernadette" and "Standing in the Shadows of Love" (both 1967).

Stubbs "fits right up there with all the icons of Motown," said Audley Smith, chief operating officer of the Motown Historical Museum. "His voice was as unique as Marvin's or as

Smokey's or as Stevie's."

The Four Tops toured for decades after their heyday and reached the charts as late as 1988 with "Indestructible" on Arista Records. In 1986, Stubbs provided the voice for Audrey II the man-eating plant in the film "Little Shop of Horrors."

The group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990 and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Stubbs' death leaves one surviving member of the original group: Abdul "Duke" Fakir. Original Top Lawrence Payton died of liver cancer in 1997. Renaldo "Obie" Benson died of lung cancer in 2005.

Stubbs hadn't done much performing in recent years because of his declining health.



'The Four Tops' in a Nov. 16, 1966 file photo. From left are Abdul Fakir, Levi Stubbs, Lawrence Payton and Renaldo Benson. Stubbs died Friday at the age of 72.

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Church Girls -- Church Girls, a musical about teenage girls who go through the same universal issues other girls go through, exploring who they are and what they want to be and the standards they choose to or not to live by, continues through Friday, Oct. 24 at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in north Portland.

St. Charles Spaghetti Dinner -- St. Charles Church, 42nd and N.E. Emerson, hosts its 58th annual Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner, Sunday, Nov. 2, from noon to 6:30 p.m. Also includes tossed salad, bread, soft drinks and pies. Take-out available. For more information, call 503-281-6461.

Poetry at Miracles -- Local and national artists and musicians share an evening of spoken word and music at the Miracles Club, 4069 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, each Wednesday's, between 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Hip-Hop Festival -- The 10th annual Portland Oregon Hip-Hop Festival (POH-HOP), featuring appearances from some of the region's hottest talents as well as headliners Illmaculate, Large Professor, Mistah FAB and One Be Lo takes place Wednesday, Oct. 22 at Berbati's; Thursday,



Oct. 23 at the Sometown Lounge; Friday, Oct. 24 at Berbati's; and Saturday, Oct. 25 at The Ash Street.

OMSI After Dark -- OMSI After Dark is a night at the museum for the 21 and over crowd filled with food, drink and science fun; \$10 fee. For more information call 503-797-4000 or visit omsi.edu.

Guys and Dolls -- Performances of the classic "Guys and Dolls" has been extended to run through Nov. 9 at the Portland Center Stage with Broadway performers, the best local talent, over 80 costumes, 258 props and every single bell and whistle intact.

Sunday Night Jazz -- Jazz enthusiasts can enjoy listening to the cool sounds of Mel Brown, in the Rogue River Room at Chinook Winds Casino Resort in Lincoln City. No cover charge.

Live Jazz -- Every Friday and Saturday from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., the Third Degrees Lounge at the RiverPlace Hotel, 1510 S.W. Harbor Way, will host the ongoing

weekend series featuring Portland's rich jazz scene with no cover or minimum purchase. For more information, visit pdxjazz.com.

Power of Love -- Orpheus gifts the sky, birds and stars as a sign of his love to Eurydice in Artists Repertory Theatre's produce of "Eurydice" by Sarah Rahl. Now playing through Oct. 26 on the Alder Stage. For tickets and information, call 503-241-1278.



Bob the Builder -- TV's Bob the Builder and his Can-Do Crew invite aspiring young builders to help get the job done in a hands-on traveling exhibit at the Portland Children's Museum. The 2,000-square-foot, multimedia exhibit invites exploration and teamwork for children and families. The show runs through Jan. 19.

Open Mic Night -- Every Wednesday night at 7 p.m., Proper Eats Market and Café, 8638 N. Lombard St., host open mic night.

First Thursday Art Gallery Opening -- Every first Thursday in the Pearl, meet the artists and join the street party for gallery receptions and openings introducing the works of many artists; this is a free event.

Sliders Grill -- Sliders Grill, 3011 N. Lombard, features an eclectic assortment of performers on the main stage, accompanied by delicious food. Call 503-459-4488 for more information.

Holiday Bazaar

Church of the Good Shepherd

Rev. Willie B. Smith, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Dapo Sobomohin, Associate
(503) 262-8201

Saturday, November 1, 2008
10:00 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday, November 2, 2008
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

4566 NE 87th
Portland OR 97220
(1 block off 87th & Prescott)

Featured Items

- Fish Dinners
- Beautiful hand made embroidered, knitted, crocheted, needle point, and sewed garments
- A wide variety of ethnic gift items- figurines, candles/holders, vases, jewelry, hand crafted angels, paintings, videos, children toys, beauty products
- Homemade baked holiday pastries - cakes, pies, cookies, brownies, and fudge.



Please Join

The Portland Observer Newspaper at

Community Service Awards Banquet

RESCHEDULED TO

Friday, March 20

7 p.m to 10 p.m.

This celebratory event will include music from local talent, awards of scholarships, and community service awards for those in the community that realize the potential in our city and communities who strive to continually give of themselves.

Charles Washington, the Publisher of the Portland Observer Newspaper carries on the legacy of his mother's hard work in the community and her efforts in helping those in the community.

for tickets or table information contact:

Kathy Linder email kathyl@portlandobserver.com or call 503-288-0033