

Listen: The Tamara Stephens Experience

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Tamara Stephens has been singing since she was four-years old. She started off singing gospel in church, and at age 8 was discovered by Linda Hornbuckle.

“She’d bring me along to shows or festivals and let me have the stage,” Stephens told *The Skanner News*. “That built my confidence. Linda is a mentor of mine; she’s a sweetheart. I absolutely love Linda.”

Stephens stopped singing for a while during her self-conscious teen years, but started again about three years ago, she said, this time with a focus on R&B and soul. And true to form, she went straight to the top.

“I hit the stage with my ex-husband Errick

of secular music, but they grew up with those groups and they let us listen to them,” she says. “So now I really love that music.”

The hip hop revolution didn’t totally pass Stephens by, however. She says her guilty pleasure is “hard-core rap,” so she has to turn down the volume on the x-rated lyrics when her kids are around. And she’s excited about an upcoming visit to Seattle to see Jay Z and Beyonce in concert.

A student at Warner Pacific University, where she is studying Human Development, Stephens says she has considered becoming a therapist because she is fascinated with how people think and why we do the things we do. But her current day job is as a contract specialist with an insurance company. And as the mother of a four-year-old she has her hands full.



PHOTOS BY MIKE NORRIS

‘I’m very critical of my own work. I have to play stuff over and over and make sure it’s right before I can let the world hear it’

Lewis at Jimmy Mak’s,” she says. “We did a song called “There” that we wrote together. And since then I’ve never stopped performing. I’ve even been on stage in LA.”

As well as beloved local musicians such as Hornbuckle and piano genius Janice Scroggins, who recently passed away, Stephens has been influenced by the likes of LaRhonda Steele— “a huge influence,” —Lalah Hathaway, Brandi and Roberta Flack. And of course Liv Warfield.

“Everyone is looking up to her now,” Stephens says. “She has really put Portland on the map.”

Stephens also loves older groups like The Temptations, Al Green and Luther Vandross.

“My parents wouldn’t let us listen to a lot

But now she’s found her way back on stage, she says she’s ready for whatever success comes her way—even if that someday means moving to a bigger city.

Meanwhile she’s recording an album with her band, The Tamara Stephens Experience, scheduled to be released next Spring.

“I’m very critical of my own work. I have to play stuff over and over and make sure it’s right before I can let the world hear it.”

Hear Tamara Stephens perform in person:

- **August 9 with Eldon T. Jones:** 7 p.m. at The Star Theater 12 NW 6th Ave., Portland
- **August 30 with Saeeda Wright, Ronnie Wright and Kimberly Monique:** 8 pm at Jimmy Maks 221 NW 10th Ave., Portland.

Stephens loves older groups like The Temptations, Al Green and Luther Vandross. ‘My parents wouldn’t let us listen to a lot of secular music, but they grew up with those groups and they let us listen to them,’ she says. ‘So now I really love that music.’

Obituary

Phillippe’ Siraubron Cration
June 30, 1940 - July 6, 2014

A celebration of life for Phillippe’ Siraubron Cration, 73, of Shreveport LA, Anchorage AK and most recently Portland OR, will be held at 3pm Saturday, July 19th. Apostle E.D. Mondaine’ officiating at Celebration Tabernacle, 8131 N Denver Ave at Kilpatrick St, in North Portland.



Mason, Ella Mason, grandchild Corey Mason, nieces and nephews: Tamara Tolbert (John), William Penson (Tonya), Deborah Sampson, and Gregory Penson (Stephanie), devoted caregiver Crystal Odum and many extended family members. Jyakima Cration (Jefferson Demo C/O 1993) and 3 other children and 11 grandchildren (Minneapolis

Mr. Cration owned a photography studio, two local second hand stores, a mom & pop convenience store, a limousine service, and over the years, a host of exotic pets.

Local survivors: Angela Cration-

MN).

Local predeceased are parents Johnnie and Velma Cration, sister Carolyn Joyce Cration-Penson.

presents

Women's Breakfast

All women are welcome!

Saturday July 26th at 9:30am

Xavier's Restaurant

1933 NE 181st Ave in Gresham

Call (503) 666-1957

For directions or more information, call 503-488-5481 or log on to www.mfhmpportland.com

520 SW 3rd Ave. Portland, OR

(503)796-9250

Avalonflowers@msn.com

avalonflowerspdx.com

Avalon Flowers

Creative, original designs

Anniversaries, weddings, funerals, birthdays!