

LaVon Hardison

Warm, engaging, eclectic vocal music

Authenticity and soul are the foundations upon which LaVon stands when she performs. She simply has a rare ability to become a direct connection between the listener and the music, singing not so much to the ears as to the heart. Even more than her obvious musical chops, this ability is what draws people to her performances, and finds them savoring each song like the courses of a gourmet meal.

While LaVon's clearly articulated lyrics unravel her songs' stories, emotion and the melody are an even bigger part of her storytelling. "I think people get caught up with words, which get to the intellect. Music can get straight to your being. Words tend to have barriers, but music has an ability to break down these barriers. Music doesn't have to jump through so many hoops on its way to the heart."

LaVon's own winding path may explain the eclectic nature of her musical choices. Born in Boston, her earliest musical roots go back to her childhood Baptist church. Then there was the formal discipline of classical/opera training with the Boston Lyric Opera, and performance in a variety of other media, including musicals, video work, and voice-overs.

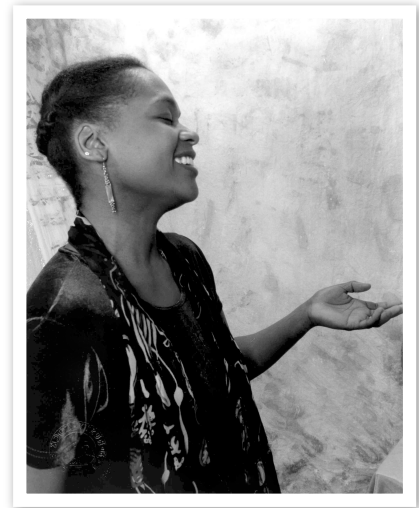
Today LaVon is confident about her voice and musical identity. She works with musical collaborators with whom she can have deep and often funny musical conversations: veteran pianist Joe Baque; eclectic trio Artou D'Tou; swing/folk guitarist Vince Brown.

"My musical friends help shape my vision. It's a connection of trust, that you can take musical risks and you'll be backed up. A lot of times I don't have the whole musical picture at the start, and it's important to have friends who are willing to hang out with you until the rest of the information arrives."

And the information is arriving. LaVon is writing more original pieces, songs that make you laugh, or catch your breath, or feel like you've known them all your life. Songs such as "The Owl and The Pussycat," which finds the two Lear poem characters in a sometimes-awkward dating situation, wrapped in an arrangement that sounds like a just-hatched jazz standard.

"Why do people laugh when they hear the blues? Why laugh about the giddiness of love? 'Cause you've been there. Even in the darkest times there's still something joyfully pathetic about the human condition."

On LaVon's debut album, Choices, she unapologetically juxtaposes jazz, soul, blues, and country -- including covers of Stevie Wonder and Cole Porter songs. The 11 songs add up to an acknowledgment of the complexity and richness and heights and depths of the human experience, told by a voice that cuts straight to the heart.



LaVon's singing gives us the rare joy of hearing an agile voice in the service of an agile mind ... and all of it blessed by a rompin' good sense of humor.

Pure fun, every time!
-Juli Kelen, K.A.O.S. fm

"When LaVon performs a song, you can be assured that not only will it sung beautifully, with the playfulness and the poignancy the song deserves, ... each song becomes a distinct and memorable experience for the listener."

-Dick Meyer, Traditions Fair Trade Cafe)

LaVon and groups with various configurations (guitar, bass, piano, drums) are available for concerts, festivals, and private functions.

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