

Gita Blakeney

“The journey exceeded all my expectations.”

*Maybe it's something in her voice, an excitement, a passion that has brought her so far. A talented singer, Gita Blakeney, truly believes in the world she has come from. Keith Ceasar spoke to the home grown songstress who has been dazzling audiences for about 15 years. Her journey has been a combination of inspiration, passion, and of course, her music. When asked about her inspiration, it was convincingly clear that she had Bermuda on her mind.*

“I love my community. I love the people of Bermuda in all its diversity,” she said. She also feels that she is destined to both serve the community and to have a successful career. “We all have a gift that we have to bring to the world, to humanity. I was [given] the gift of song, [and] a spirit that has always wanted to be touching people in one way or another.”

With a career that began in the tourism industry, Blakeney explained that it was that period of her life which opened her eyes to the importance of how one person can contribute to the whole. “My background was in the tourism industry, so I really understood our part of being a tourism product,” she said. “It is all of us Bermudians that really sold Bermuda; I took this on deeply in my soul. Essentially, I feel as if this has been my calling, and that every time I do something that involves the community, I get a sense of value and worth that you cannot put a dollar [value] to. Giving to your community and trying to strive towards the betterment of the environment in whatever capacity – it's just who I am.”

She added that there is another big factor that constantly lends to her inspiration. “I married someone who inspires me because he supports all that I am. As an artist, I am constantly looking for more, developing as an artist. I love being married. I love how marriage makes me feel; it really stimulates me in terms of my artistry, because it's a good feeling that I'm now sharing my life with someone.”

Still on a path of discovery, she said she is constantly learning more from the journey she travels. “I've lived in Paris, and that is when I got to appreciate the value of other cultures and learned to have tolerance and appreciation for the way other people live; it expanded my scope of how I see the world. I love the exposure of different people and cultures because I think we are all part of the tapestry that makes our world exciting.”

Currently, she is the Director of Programming for the Bermuda National Gallery. She discussed briefly one of the pilot programs that she is involved with through the Bermuda National Gallery. Through a partnership with Raleigh International Bermuda, a U.K. based program, is designed to take students and give them opportunities around the world. The pilot program puts students into real world situations. After they return, students will be involved in a local project. This program will also give them the opportunity to work with the National Training Board.

There are some things the Island can do to inspire those who are leaning towards more artistic aspirations in life. She believes the Island can help close the gap, but it is a process which the Island and individual must fully embrace. “What's important is for people to identify what really motivates them initially, and then take it upon themselves to get the information they need. Ask the necessary questions and don't be afraid of not knowing all the answers,” she said. “The evolution of ourselves is about experience; it's about time and timing. The first thing you got to discover is what is important to you. How can I do more with what I care about. The more that I

grow the more I realize how much I don't know. I don't mind asking questions, I don't mind exploring who I am."

With regards to local talent, Blakeney truly believes that Bermuda "can be a magnificent country for the rest of the world to emulate. We are just a small Island, but we have the potential for magnificence." In order to accomplish this, she said, there are a number of factors that must be set in place which would harness Bermuda's talent. "We have to make sure we have the infrastructure and the education, so that they can help us reach our potential in our respective fields. She also stressed that "we need an understanding of how importance the arts are to our culture; the heart and soul of a community is its arts and culture."

While it has become a journey that has exceeded all her expectations thus far, Blakeney knows there is more she wants to accomplish. And, in accomplishing more in her life, she knows that her community will benefit, her society will benefit, and in the greater scheme, the world will benefit. "I'm always evolving...there is more of me. I'm just more than what I would have been a year ago. I never let myself get caught up with perfection. [This is because] success is when preparation meets opportunity, when you are preparing for an opportunity, that is your moment of success."

*Blakeney will be releasing a new CD later this year.*