

## **URSULA WALKER**

Jazz Vocalist, Educator, Community Contributor

### **PERFORMING CAREER**

Has performed regularly at clubs, concerts, festivals, corporate and private events in the Detroit area and elsewhere for the past 6 decades

On February 19, 2012, performing at Detroit's Orchestra Hall as a featured soloist on "The Sacred Music of Duke Ellington", a concert sponsored by the Detroit International Jazz Festival

As one of Aretha Franklin's favorite jazz vocalists, was invited to perform at her 2011 annual Christmas party, and has performed for Aretha on many occasions in past years

Performed in concert in 2011 at Orchestra Hall as part of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Jazz Educational Series

Performed at the 2010 Grand Hotel Jazz Festival on Mackinac Island

Performed many times at the Detroit International Jazz Festival (formerly, the Ford/Detroit International Jazz Festival, and the Montreux/Detroit Jazz Festival) since its inception in the early 1980's

Opened concerts for many international artists, including Oscar Peterson, Dizzy Gillespie, and Tania Maria

In 2004, collaborated with the Detroit Dance Collective in staging a multi-media jazz/dance performance at the Henry Ford Center for the Performing Arts

In 2002, performed "Shop Around" for Smoky Robinson, upon his receiving the International Achievement Award at the Michigan Governor's Arts Awards

In 1998, traveled to Fort Lauderdale to perform with the Detroit Jazz All-Stars, which included trumpeter, Marcus Belgrave and saxophonist, George Benson

From 1992-'94 led a 6-piece group featuring Belgrave and Benson

Was the featured vocalist on the soundtrack of the Fox Network sitcom, "Duet", when the network debuted in 1987

In the 1980's, sang with the Stan Kenton Band when it performed locally

In the 1970's and '80's, was a regular National-Anthem singer for the Detroit Lions, beginning with their last game at Tiger Stadium in 1974 and then at the new Silverdome

Performed Rachmaninoff's "Vocalise" with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 1976

Has performed, over the years, with a number of community symphony orchestras, including the Southfield, Royal Oak, Rochester, and Warren Symphony Orchestras

In 1969, began a 21-year association as featured vocalist with the 21-piece Brookside Jazz Ensemble, a band that initiated the popular "P'Jazz" Series at Detroit's Pontchartrain Hotel

In the 1960's, sang for four years with Jack Brokensha, internationally-known vibraphonist, formerly with the Australian Jazz Quintet, at his club, "Brokensha's"

From 1960-1963, was a featured performer on WJR-Radio in Detroit on the Music Hall Cavalcade with host, Jimmy Lontz

In the 1950's and '60's, was in frequent demand as a commercial jingle singer

From 1956-1960, was a regular live performer on WJR-Radio in Detroit as a choral and small-groups member, and featured singer with the Don Large Make Way For Youth Chorus

From 1951-'55, was a regular performer on the Auntie Dee Show, a popular children's variety program on WXYZ-TV

### **HONORS, AWARDS, RECOGNITION**

Named Outstanding Jazz Vocalist at the 2011, 2004, and 2000 Detroit Music Awards

In 2011, honored by Detroit Symphony Orchestra for Contribution to the Detroit Jazz Community

Recipient of the 2007 Southern Christian Leadership Conference Aretha Franklin Award in Recognition of Accomplishments in Performing Arts, presented by Aretha Franklin

In 2006, received the Detroit Metro Area Musicians and Entertainers Association Teddy Harris, Jr. Legendary Music Award

In 2000, elected to the Metro Times Music Awards Hall of Fame

Recipient of the 2000 Southeastern Michigan Jazz Association (SEMJA) Jazz Artist of the Year Award for Contributions to the Performing Arts and Excellence in Music

Received the 1997 Midwest Arts Legends of Jazz Hall of Fame Award

In 1997, honored with a Distinguished Service Award from the People of Wayne County

In 1995, recipient of the Michigan Council For the Arts Outstanding Musicians Award

In 1979, received a Clio Award for best vocal performance on a commercial

### **EDUCATING**

Over the years, put on numerous clinics at Detroit-area schools and colleges, including the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and Northwestern Michigan College

In 1998, joined the Sisters in Jazz mentoring program, an endeavor devoted to mentoring and encouraging young, talented women in jazz music, and performed with them at the Montreux/Detroit Jazz Festival

In the early 1990's, held the jazz vocal chair for two years at the Center for Creative Studies Institute of Music and Dance

In the 1980's, mentored young people at the Actors' Alliance Theatre Company

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

From 1994 to the present, has, as a volunteer, sung the National Anthem and a song for the survivors of breast cancer at the Susan G. Komen Detroit Race For the Cure, sponsored by the Karmanos Cancer Center, an event which annually attracts upwards of 30,000 participants

Helped establish and performs regularly for the Henry Ford Hospital-West Bloomfield Music Heals Program

In 2011, led musical performance at Detroit's Orchestra Hall to raise funds for Multiple Myeloma

In 2011, as a volunteer, performed, and participated as a planner on the steering committee, of a fundraising event at Detroit's Orchestra Hall to benefit Children's Leukemia

Has volunteered her talents for other cancer-related activities and events for Karmanos, and for Gilda's Club

From 1997-'99, served as a board member for C.H.I.P. (Creative Healing Initiative Partnership), an organization dedicated to addressing the undermet healthcare needs of the artistic community

Was a regular participant in fund-raising events for Focus Hope from the 1970's – '90's

In the 1980's, co-hosted, with Soupy Sales, the Telethon for the Mentally Retarded

Through the 1970's and '80's, was a regular participant in fund-raising efforts for Muscular Dystrophy, performing at events and appearing on the Telethons

Also, through the 1970's and '80's, regularly performed for children and parents at fundraising events sponsored by Head Start

In the 1960's, performed for inmates at Jackson State Penitentiary

Beginning at age 12, spent many years entertaining service men for the U.S.O., in downtown Detroit and Selfridge Air Force Base in Mt. Clemens; and, also, performed at many charitable events around the Detroit area

### **RECORDING**

- 2011 "New Beginnings", Doug Halladay
- 1998 "Unwind", Compilation of Detroit Jazz Artists, Creative Healing Initiative Partnership and Gilda's Club
- 1998 "Hope For the Holidays", Detroit Jazz Greats, S & S Entertainment Group
- 1997 "You be the Judge", Myron Wahls Trio
- 1995 "Focusing the Vision", Vincent York
- 1988-89 Sound Track of Fox Television Network sitcom, "Duet"
- 1982 "The Montreux/Detroit Collection, Volume Two: An Evening of Song"
- 1981 "Cookbook No. 1", Brookside Jazz Ensemble
- 1976 "Boppin' at Bobbie's", Jack Brokensha Trio, featuring Ursula Walker
- 1975 "Jazz Mass", James Tatum