

Singer Lina captures the heart of WSSU

By Mignon Turner
Special to the Argus

Welcome to the 1920s; you have just been transported to a small speakeasy in New Orleans, where bootleggers and swing dancers enjoy the jazz played on stage by Louis Armstrong and other talented musicians.

A young lady joins the stage waiting her turn at the mic, a large flower adorns her hair and bangles dangle from her wrist.

If by now you haven't figured out who we're referring to, you soon will.

Lina evoked a combination of Prohibitions Era along with jazz, opera, contemporary hip-hop and R&B.

A native of Texas, this rising star and Atlantic Recording Artist was honored Winston-Salem State University on a tour of colleges in October.

She appeared to sign autographs and promote her new CD entitled *Stranger on Earth*. It is her refreshing style which is welcoming this new comer to the hip-hop generation.

She encompasses the rhythm and blues from the past and intertwines them with other musical genres.

Lina said that she learned early in the business to differentiate herself from other artist.

This has resonated into a style that allows her to show less skin and more talent.

She added that it was difficult for her to begin her songwriting career because so many individuals within the industry wanted her to conform her appearance to fit with other R&B artists.

"What is seldom seen becomes rare," she said.

Born into a musically inclined family, Lina's mother is also a singer while her father plays the guitar.

At an early age Lina learned to appreciate all forms of music. Unlike most little girls, Lina's free time consisted of singing for all types of school and church functions as well as listening to her mother's prized record collection from the '30s, '40s and '50s.

"Billie Holiday was my first love, there was just something about her approach to a song, and the blues she brought to everything her touched," she said.

Today the influences Lina receives from the African-American artists of the past are present in the lyrics and songs on her soulful CD.

She said that her CD is a state-

ment that pays tribute to the black artists in the past who did not receive the appropriate financial compensation or widespread recognition they deserved.

"I'm proud of our African-American history, our many gifts, passions, and our ability to survive in the face of so many obstacles. With this album, I'm trying to make my own contribution to what is a truly remarkable artistic heritage. I want to give something back with my music."

However, the road to success was not ways easy for Lina. She admits to all of the many chal-

lenges she faced in trying to get discovered.

But with perseverance and dedication Lina continued to pursue her goals.

Her first taste of success came in 1998 when the Los Angeles-based Tyrese recorded her *Ain't Nothin' but a Jones* for his platinum debut album.

She continued to cut a serious of demo tapes all while working from nine to five until she met Travis (T-House) a producer who assisted her steps with her songwriting career.

To date Lina's greatest accom-

plishments have been: as the opening act for the Joan Osborne Tour in the fall of 2000, the opening act for the Craig David Tour in the UK in the winter of 2000, releasing *Stranger on Earth* in the UK in January of this year.

She performed *My Funny Valentine* with jazz legend Herbie Hancock at the MIDEM Conventions in Cannes, France.

Lina said: "Every show was successful, and every crowd welcoming, from the younger Craig David to Curu's hip-hop crowd to Joan Osborne's rock crowd."

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