



SISTA MONICA - BIO

Photo by Paul Schraub taken February 5, 2009

Mo Muscle Records' recording artist - Sista Monica Parker releases her 9th CD "Soul Blues & Ballads" in the spring of 2009. It is a CD of her classic jewels of blues which includes: "A Chance To Breathe", "It's A Shame - It's A Mystery", "Never Say Never" and "I Don't Want To Hurt You Baby" just to name a few. Known as the "*Lioness of the Blues*" Monica is an award winning blues, soul and gospel singer, songwriter, speaker, & music producer. She is a captivating and dynamic performer. Today, Sista Monica is one of the most admired women on the international festival music scene.

This new release follows her gospel & inspirational CD "**Sweet Inspirations**" in September 2008. The CD is a 17-track

compilation songs of hope, faith and changes for our challenging times. Songs selected and made her own are "You Gotta Move" by Mississippi Floyd McDowell, "This Joy" by Shirley Caesar", "Imagine" by John Lenon, "Sweet Inspiration" by the Sweet Inspirations, and her own "All Things Are Possible" and her funky up-tempo "Live in The Spirit". The last track is a bonus; "To Dream the Impossible Dream" a tribute Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he gives the baton to the first African American President - Barack Obama.



In 2005, she aptly titled her new release "**Can't Keep a Good Woman Down**". Sista Monica gives a renewed meaning to blues as healing music. Surviving cancer has given new power and freedom to her lyrics. Each track evokes the gift she feels to be able to write, sing, produce and perform music. "It's a comeback album," she says. "The focus and the theme is speaking to the truth — my truth. It's sorta autobiographical, current and in your face, offering hope and a reflection of my remarkable recovery experience." Radio DJ's say it's a favorite with originals such as the title track "Can't Keep A Good Woman Down", "Show Me What You're Working With", "Cooking with Grease", "Lip Service" and "It's Good To Be Alive!"

Sista Monica is a Soul Survivor!

Determined to sing and live out her purpose, Monica underwent more than eighteen months of aggressive chemotherapy, surgery, radiation and physical therapy. The result was a complete removal of the tumor, but nerves and muscles in her entire upper right side were damaged. Eventually, with determination, faith and patience, Monica regained mobility in her microphone-holding arm and hand. She was faced with fierce physical pain, the emotional confrontation of mortality, and a long road of recovery. It is restored! She drew upon her inner strength, discipline and spirituality - and of

course, the music. And, like her music, Sista Monica Parker emerged from the struggle strong, happy and proud.

There's no keeping this good woman down! **In 2005**, Sista Monica received the "**Artist of the Year Award**" for all of Santa Cruz County, in California. The award recognizes her talents and community service. She was honored for her leadership for spearheading a Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert. She rallied Linda Tillery, local musicians and the entire community to help to raise twenty five thousand dollars for Oxfam, Save the Children, and Habitat for Humanity's International.



In 2004, Sista Monica compiled several soul and jazz standards remembering Ray Charles' "Georgia on My Mind" and Dinah Washington's "What a Difference a Day Makes". This healing and inspirational CD was titled "**Love, Soul & Spirit Vol. 1.**" The CD was recorded and produced with the softer and sensitive vocals of Sista Monica while she was undergoing treatments. Her piano player - Danny "B" stuck by her side and encouraged her to continue to write. He visited her in the hospital and at home for piano and vocals sessions. She even sang in the hallways of UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center during treatments. She wrote the lyrics to "All Things Are Possible" and "Why Did You Leave My Child?" while Danny B., offered the musical accompaniment. These songs offered an urban contemporary flavor to her repertoire of music. Straight through the storm, she kept singing. She contends that it was the music and the grace of God that kept her alive!



16,000 European fans



In 2001, Monica released "**Live in Europe**", a CD filled with the huge sound and energy of the artist affectionately called 'The Blues Lioness.' Blues Revue magazine compared the record to the late great "**Albert Collins & the Icebreakers – LIVE**". Finally, Monica had fulfilled the long-standing request of her fans – she created a recording that captured her lively and powerful stage performances. In a preamble to Monica's current status as a leader among the next generation of great blues women, she once came to what the Associated Press called a "Rockin' Rescue." Monica stood in for her idol Etta James at the San Jose Americas Festival when Ms. James was hospitalized the day of the performance. Sista Monica first calmed the crowd. She finished the headlining set with two encores and standing ovations. By the year 2000, "**The Blues Lioness**" had built such a reputation that she was invited to perform for President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and thousands of delegates at the 2000 Democratic National Convention.



Two years later in 2002, Sista Monica received the "**Artist of the Year Award**" at the prestigious 17th Annual **Monterey Bay Blues Festival**. She joins the ranks of the legendary Buddy Guy, BB King and Etta James. The career momentum took her back to Holland; she completed a 17-concert tour of The Netherlands in November of that same year. Upon returning to the United States, Monica discovered a lump under her right arm. It was diagnosed as a rare and severe form of cancer - Synovial Sarcoma. She was told that without treatment, she had 3 months to live. That was six years ago! She is stronger than ever!

Later in 2001, Monica released her first traditional gospel CD, "**Gimme That Old Time Religion.**" This CD with songs include: "Walk Around Heaven All Day," "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands," "Didn't It Rain," "Amazing Grace" and "Bye & Bye" captured the enduring qualities of good old time, hand-clapping gospel music. It is filled with congregational singing and music. For Monica, the recording evokes songs she heard as a little girl. Listening to LPs



on the stereo while her mother braided her hair before Sunday school. The CD drew inspiration from Mahalia Jackson, The Staples Singers, Evangelist Shirley Caesar, Rev. James Cleveland, Albertina Walker, and many gospel choirs in the Midwest growing up.

In 2000, Monica released a third CD "**People Love the Blues**" to critical acclaim and talk of Grammy nods. She recruited guest guitarists included Jimmy Thackery, Larry McCray and Dan Caron from the Charles Brown Band. Accolades and industry recognition for Sista Monica came as a whirlwind.

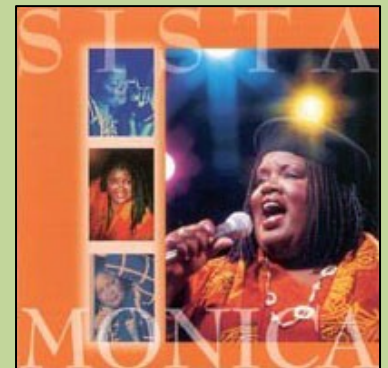


Tom Hyslop of Blues Revue magazine wrote *"She's star material all the way... This is a near-perfect record... (Her) huge voice and incredible chops give her one of the best instruments around."*

Bill Milkowski of Jazz Times magazine wrote *"An explosive singer on the California blues scene, she smokes all the competition (with the possible exception of Koko Taylor) on People Love the Blues"*

Self Titled Signature CD

In 1997, Monica co-produced with Daniel Beconcini her piano player and musical director, the second and self-titled CD "**SISTA MONICA**". Comparisons to Etta James, Mavis Staples, James Brown, Albert Collins, and Koko Taylor followed from her compelling stage presence and powerful, gospel-influenced original blues. *"What Difference Does It Make?"* *"The Sista Don't Play,"* *"I Been Bamboozled,"* and *"Stop Talking 'Bout Me Stalking You"* are all hits from this project. She recruited veteran trombone player - Fred Wesley from the James Brown band for horn arrangements and he delivered.



Debut CD



In 1995, Sista Monica released her debut CD, **"Get Out Of My Way!"** Originally intended as a sales tool "demo" for corporate gigs, Monica changed her vision once in the studio. Realizing the full potential of her band-and weighing the costs of studio rental and production - she set a new goal. She announced to her musicians "We are going around the world on this CD." Sure enough, the lead single *"Windy City Burner,"* written by guitarist Vasti Jackson and Monica climbed the public radio, AAA, and commercial radio charts. Monica's international recording and touring career took off. She started out first in The Netherlands - Utrecht, Holland, Mexico, and Canada sharing stages with Luther Allison, Lil Milton and Keb Mo.

Gary - Chicago – Detroit Blues & Gospel Roots

Sista Monica was born and raised in Gary, Indiana. At the age of 7, she began putting down her gospel roots, singing and touring with her Great Band Missionary Baptist church gospel choir. This early exposure to gospel music stuck with her. But it wasn't until later that Monica turned this early love of music into her life's calling - and most recently - her redeemer. At the age of 12, Monica started participating in the choir's mini-tours between Gary, Chicago and Detroit.

She soaked up the rich melodies of soul, rhythm & blues and gospel music. Monica was heavily influenced by Rev. Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Buddy Guy, Shirley Caesar, Mavis Staples and the Staples Singers, Lil Milton, James Brown and Sam Cooke. After some college, she enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, making her way to the rank of Sergeant (E-5) in three years. Returning to civilian life, she owned and operated her own engineering and IT executive search firm in Chicago, Illinois. In 1987, she relocated to the hi-tech hotspot of Northern California's Silicon Valley. Monica became a full time as a recruiting consultant for clients including Apple Computer, Hewlett Packard, Sun Microsystems, Excite, Yahoo, Microsoft and Kaiser Permanente Information Technology–KPIT.

In The Beginning

In 1992, after seeing her former neighbor Stanley Burrell (a.k.a. M.C. Hammer), perform on the Arsenio Hall Show, Monica decided to turn her singing talent into more than just performing in her automobile and bathroom. Already accustomed to hard work and discipline, she set up her garage to make a living performing the music inside her. Almost immediately, she was sharing the Monterey Bay Blues Festival stages with Etta James, Gladys Knight, The Neville Brothers, Koko Taylor, Bobby "Blue" Bland, and other greats from the world of blues and R&B.

Award Winner

Monica is a the winner of the 2007 Santa Cruz County's Artist of the Year Award, the 2002 Monterey Bay Blues Festival – “Artist of the Year” Award; the 2003 Gail Rich Award; the 2004 San Jose Mercury News’ Most Creative Women in Silicon Valley Award; and the 1999 BAMMIES – Bay Area Music Awards. She has been nominated two times as the United Kingdom's Best Blues Female Artist. In 1998, 2007 and 2008, she was nominated as Best Contemporary and Blues/Soul Female Artist by the Blues Foundation (formerly known as the W.C Handy Awards, Memphis, Tennessee).



In addition to touring and performing, Sista Monica started writing her autobiography. The book is about a young girl who sang in the church choir, became a woman Marine, a high tech recruiter, later discovers her voice and becomes an international festival favorite and headliner. Finally, she is diagnosed with a terminal illness and eventually is healed and survives cancer. She learns the truth about human dynamics, the healing process, about transformation and the will to thrive beyond prognosis.



Because of her distinct voice and compelling story, she is invited to sing and perform public speaking engagements worldwide. Sista Monica performs with more conviction, passion, energy and power. She has expanded her musical career to include her veteran blues band, and the development of a 50 voice gospel workshop choir. She performs festivals, weddings, corporate events, in nursing homes, hospitals, and diverse spiritual communities. The Sista is a show stopper! Monica sings and leads her band towards the type of events that allow her to impact audiences. She makes a favorable difference and lifts the spirit with her blues, soul and gospel music. Visit www.sistamonica.com. Join her on www.facebook.com and hear her music on www.myspace.com/sistamonica and www.cdbaby.com