Michael Eure Show Transcript
Black Music Month – Nitia & Friends
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Michael Eure
Hello, this is Michael Eure and I'd like to invite you to the Michael Eure show, featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

Michael Eure
Ron is our student host today, go ahead.

Ron Edwards
My name is Ron Edwards, I'm the host today. I'm a student here at Wake Tech. I've been here for about a year now. I will be graduating in May. And I plan to transfer to the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, because I'm studying computer science. And today we have Miss Nitia Steward, our resident music lover and performer today she's gonna give us a little mini concert and in honor of black music month, Miss Nitia Steward, welcome. And I guess you could take it away.

Nitia Steward
Yes. Thank you very much.

Ron Edwards
Oh, thank you Miss Miss Steward. Um, that was heavy. And, in fact, I want you to correct me if I'm wrong. I'm a little young but so Strange Fruit was written by Billie Holiday in the 1930s to protest lynchings correct?

Nitia Steward
Absolutely. Yes.

Ron Edwards
The second song was sound, sounds like Sam Cooke changed.

Nitia Steward
Very good.

Ron Edwards
Britain in the 60s, I believe. I remember my dad telling me that was written when he was refused entry into a whites only motel or something like that. Is that correct? And your third song was Marvin Gaye, we all know that one, What's Going On? And I think he wrote that well in to protest the Vietnam War. One thing and then a lot of the brutalities that were going on during the Civil Rights Movement, or thereafter was am I correct on that one too?

Nitia Steward
You're a smart man.

Ron Edwards
Ah, okay, I'm younger, but I got it. Um, so Ms. Steward what got you into music? Like, were you all was it always a thing in your soul? You always felt the beat or were you? Somebody bring it to you, introduce you to it? Were you born in a family of musicians or like how did you? What were your origins?

Nitia Steward
For a lot of us music is a part of our community. I grew up with music in the house. My father loved music. My mother loved music. My dad even enjoyed a lot of country sound. So it was just a part of our household.

Ron Edwards
Okay, likewise, Yeah, me too. I remember.

Nitia Steward
And we can't forget in the church, right? Can't forget that.

Ron Edwards
I just remember being a little kid my mom would throw on some Marvin Gaye or some Luther Vandross or something just to clean the house, you know?

Nitia Steward
Yeah. Yeah. We call that Music Saturdays, right?

Ron Edwards
So who are some of your like, the most important artists to you as far as bringing about change? Or that music that powerful music that just touches your soul who are your most important?

Nitia Steward
All of those that you just named for sure, for sure. I was going to, but you named Marvin Gaye and lot plenty of songs. And you know, when one group that that we actually do in our churches some Mavis Staples, yes, the Staples Center? Yeah, they were definitely a part of my growth and I tried to fit that one in there too. But maybe next time, but maybe Staple singles, we're really big doing we're doing those 60 areas and 50s and, and right into the 70s and 80s. They were really popular.

Ron Edwards
I remember watching my mom put those made Mavis Staples vinyls on the on the record player. So, Who were some of your favorite to listen to? Lisa Lee?

Nitia Steward

Oh, of course. The Queen of souls herself, Aretha Franklin. We all yet to to reach those heights but she definitely set the bar she set the bar, right? And and then I think for me growing up I in the Gospel section, I'm a really big Yolanda Adams fan. I enjoy Yolanda Adams. And of course Kurt Franklin, and you know, there are people nowadays that are, they're doing awesome things musically.

Ron Edwards
Yesterday I remember being a little when I was coming up I remember Kurt Franklin was just coming out and he made gospel kind of seem like more I didn't a lot of his songs I didn't even know were gospel until I, you know, got into the lyrics and really know what he was talking about. So yeah, I get that too. Um, well, I guess moving along. I saw that you said at the end of your at the end of what's going on you were saying the names of some people who died to police brutality. And that's important because a lot of music can affect change that way. Um, music has been the vehicle to a lot of, it reflects society a lot. So I guess what's going on was perfect. Because it's it seems, it seems like we always look on the news and somebody else is going black, white, whatever somebody else is getting getting brutalized. So we thank you for. And we are you we understand that you have another another performance you want to want to do for us as well.

Nitia Steward
Yes, we do toward the end of the show is if that's what time it is now.

Ron Edwards
Is there? Is there any or is there any way we can reach you? You have a website or anything?

Nitia Steward
Yes, I do have a website, and it's just simply roenitiasteward.com and you can reach me there and send me a message and and my last performance actually, one of the ladies that is joining me, my friends, you know. I enjoy saying Nitia & Friends because in this business sometimes we're not shure who's gonna show up for the next project. So it's always exciting to meet new people and work with those that we've worked with in the past. And so I just want to give a quick shout out to Tonisha and Randy and Tom, and Frida for joining me on this on the last election of the day with some fun for us to do, kicking off the community and working in the community in small studios around town and just wanting to continue to provide a good sound.

Ron Edwards
Yes, ma'am. Now do you always, is your music always with a message or do you have? Are you a, do you have a spectrum of things are you are you?

Nitia Steward
I'm trying to set the atmosphere, right? So I also have roots in jazz and not roots, roots because jazz for me came a little later. That's what kind of helped me move into the business part of singing. I was I was asked to sing a song for a retirement. And I did that retirement party and the lady asked if I would come and sing for her family. And I'm like, and pay me? And so that kind of kicked off that idea that, wow, I could make money doing something that I enjoy. And jazz seemed to be such an easy flow for me in terms of just the sounds that it provides, and the history and so that really helped me dig into my roots

too musically, you know, jazz being an American stylings that have really definitely taken roots in our culture, as well. And so this is definitely my homage to keeping that alive, you know, with Billie Holiday and Nancy Wilson and Sarah Vaughn and, you know, even Nina Simone, with her diversity, and so I'm just glad to be in the sisterhood of diversity.

Ron Edwards
There you go. I'm myself, I'm just coming into jazz. I got older parents. So I know a lot all about the old soul. I'm just getting myself into jazz and I just picked up a Coltrane album with my favorite song, A Few of My Favorite Things. I don't know if you heard that one.

Nitia Steward
Absolutely. I have from North Carolina. Absolutely.

Ron Edwards
Really. I really. I got a little vinyl collection here myself. So I'm starting to dive into jazz myself. Thanks for dropping in on this. How you doing Mr. Eure?

Michael Eure
Oh, I'm back. How y'all doing? Excellent. And thank you, Ronald, and we're not we're not gonna push Roenitia too much because we have Earl he's going to come in in a little bit. But I do you have the ability to do one more quick song for us before we bring Earl to talk a little bit about Juneteenth and 1919 the NAACP lynching petition? So why don't Ronald and I go backstage?

Nitia Steward
This is my tribute to Nina Simone.

Michael Eure
Hello, Roenitia.

Nitia Steward
Hello.

Michael Eure
Nitia, you've done a wonderful job. And we really appreciate you coming in sharing your talents with us in the Wake Tech and the greater Raleigh and North Carolina and the national community, hopefully International. For the audience, if you have had some questions or comments, please feel free to put them in the chat. And to round out our guest, host student. He was very, very excellent today and we'll have him back again. I'm going to ask now if we can kind of get ready to wind it down. But we're going to do first of all, before we do it, Roenitia, do you have anything you'd like to say before we play the last clip for you and then we're going to have Earl Ijames come and talk a little bit about Juneteenth.

Nitia Steward
Okay, well just wanted to remember on this last election, one of our beauty, beauty, beauty, beautiful icons of black music is the Miss Diana Ross. And so this song that's about to play is my rendition of one

of her favorites. That's also become a staple in times of of justice. And so this this song is a selection of that also honoring in black history. Two of our icons, Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, if that helps at all to know that song is coming through they were some great songwriters and and she's still with us and and Nick has gone on to glory and so we just want to celebrate them as well in the in the in the in the vein of songwriting.

Michael Eure
And we certainly are going to try to bring you back to do some type of musical workshop with our students. In the future. Maybe in the fall. We can do virtual things. Just like we do in person. So Ronald and I and and we're going backstage, we're gonna do the video and then we'll all come back and listen to Earl for a bit and then we'll be gone. And thanks the audience and next week we'll be back with our final session and we're going to focus on HBCU music. So we're looking at some alumni and some musical formats that are specifically unique to HBCUs. And North Carolina, of course has 10 and we are all very proud of all of them. All right, thank you. Thank you.

Ron Edwards
Well, I was just gonna say-

Michael Eure
Thank you. All right. And now we're back with Earl Ijames and he is a curator for the North Carolina Museum of History. He tried to do this last week and hopefully we'll get it right this time. We're going to talk a little bit, I, Earl just kind of take over and let us know what you want to talk about about Juneteenth and the 1919, NAACP petition. Thank you.

Earl James
Thank you, Michael. Oh, and thank you, Miss Roenitia. That was beautiful. Document read artifacts from my collection here. Which we want to remind our learners, one of the reasons we celebrate Juneteenth and we celebrate our freedom is because of a lot of the atrocities that Billie Holiday wrote about in Strange Fruit that you so eloquently reacted and your version. So I took the opportunity, and I know you can't see this, but I'm going to read. This is a copy of an original petition that I looked at In the state archives of North Carolina, there's a petition from the press service of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also known as NAACP, which was founded in 1909. This is a petition addressed from Hugh Taft Root, A. Mitchell Palmer, who sign address to the nation demanding that the Congress investigate lynching dated July 25 1919. I'll give you some context 1919 over the 1920s is called the bloody summers, because what was literally going on, was not only people being lynched for taking their land, bone rights, and for outright terror. But also American heroes who served validly in World War One, were literally returning to America expecting equality and were met by lynch mobs. It is well known that the innocent with the guilty suffer the cruel inflections of mob violence, or lynching. Mobs have even invaded courtrooms and prisons to take away and murder those prisoners whose punishments had already fixed. Now early in 1918, a hospital was invaded by a lynch mob, and the attack resulted death patient a shock. So, when you sign that it is about me to get that primary source to share with our audience, and also as you said, wait over to Sam Cooke. It is appropriate because we revive and online exist civil rights exhibit in North Carolina Museum of History called a change is gonna come black, white and Indian voices for racial equality. And of course exhibit opens

with Cooke singing because then this and eloquently reenact it and we hope that that website nccivilrights.org will be back up and running once we've revamped and update some of the software and include some of this new research information like you see that I have just shared. So again, Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom, obviously, for our formerly enslaved ancestors, but the Fifth Amendment I'll remind you outlawed slavery and free everyone, black Indian, youn, and old, from the evil curse of slavery, that was a scourge, not only North Carolina, not only in the south and ex Confederate States, but the laws supporting slavery and discrimination were nationwide. And that is why the NAACP was and still is a nationwide organization. So thank you, Michael, for another good show.

Michael Eure
Well, thank you for coming. And, Earl, I want to make sure we throw this announcement. Wake Tech is the number one Online Community College in the United States, and we're gonna work with you. We're gonna get you to stop this freezing and have you come back and really do a complete show. Roenitia and Ronald, thank you so much for coming today. And if all of you want to give a quick little goodbye, I'm open your mics and just say goodbye to the audience. And we'll see you next time. Okay. Roenitia? Ronald? No way is he frozen to? Well anyway, thank you all for participating and thank you to the audience. Tune in next week at 12 o'clock for the Michael your show celebrating Black Music Month. And this is available on your garden this evening for the audience. If you have friends that want to see it, they didn't get to participate live. Thank you.