

## **Introducing...**

### **Marzette Griffith**

None of the history of Chicago's Soul scene would be complete without discussing a chapter on Marzette Griffith. Having earned notoriety as a well-polished performer in both the music and dance industries, he has recorded numerous songs as a solo artist and with his former group, Essence. As the lead singer of Essence, he propelled two of their singles, "Sweet Fools," and "I Ain't Much But I'm All I Got," into the Billboard Chart's Top 100. Released on the Epic Records subsidiary, Cleveland International, these R&B classics were produced by Chicago legend, Willie Henderson, along with Frank Rand and Grammy winner, Jim Peterik, of Ides of March ("Vehicle") and Survivor ("Eye of the Tiger") fame. Mr. Griffith and Mr. Peterik formed a friendship and musical alliance that remains to this day. They sometimes write, perform, produce, and arrange songs together. Another one of Griffith's long time friends and writing partners is Grammy nominee, Paul Richmond (writer of "Shining Star" by The Manhattan Transfer). Mr. Griffith's smooth, melodic style and broad vocal range have been heard on several levels within the entertainment industry. He has performed for radio and television stations such as Chicago's own V-103, WGN Channel 9's Morning Segment, events such as The Black Woman's Expo, and aboard cruise ships.

Marzette Griffith's music is currently radio broadcasted for fans on both a national and international scale. He also performs live around the globe, sharing the stage with various, fellow entertainers. Such artists include Ray, Goodman, & Brown, The O'Jays, The Chi-Lites, The Dramatics, Angela Winbush, Midnight Star, Syleena Johnson, The Emotions, After 7, Heatwave, Earth, Wind, & Fire, Will Downing, Phil Perry, The Temptations, Ramsey Lewis, James Brown, K-Ci & JoJo, The Whispers, Kem, Keith Sweat, Gladys Knight, Harold Melvin's Blue Notes, The Stylistics, R. Kelly, Steve Cropper, Mindi Abair, Casey Abrams, Lisa McClowry, Steve Oliver, Si Jay, and more.

Additionally, he toured regions of the world as one of Bobby Womack's background singers. It is also worth mentioning that one of the Ides of March's biggest hits, "Vehicle," was resurrected once more with Mr. Griffith's vocals and Fred Astaire-styled dance moves after Jim Peterik asked him to perform the song with him for World Stage Productions. Presently, Griffith is one of the lead singers with The Chi-Lites and he continues to grace the stage as a solo artist.

Through everything, Mr. Griffith has continually nurtured his love for all things musical -- singing, writing, arranging, producing, and dancing. He has enchanted audiences for years with his graceful Steppin' Style, becoming one of the pioneers of this dance genre in Chicago. Subsequently, he has made history; he is the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the very first World's Largest Stepper's Contest. After a two-year hiatus, he returned during the fourth year of the competition to claim the 1<sup>st</sup> place honor, again. Another fact to note is that he creates and sings most of his music that steppers dance to. A few of his songs are "Nobody By That Name," "Nothing But A Party," "Promise Me Your Love," "Rhythm On Time," and "Groove Spot." Besides this, he made his cameo film appearance steppin' in the worldwide release of the movie, *Love Jones*.

Marzette Griffith has been presented with several awards and has been honorably recognized for his talents. He was nominated for the Black Excellence Award by the African-American Arts Alliance of Chicago in the category of Music. Moreover, he received the NAACP Sammy Davis Jr. Award, Word of Mouth Entertainment Lifetime Achievement Award, Still of The Night Record Pool Award, Word of Mouth Entertainment Microphone Award, and the Chicago Steppin' Guide Magazine Award. Other honors and distinctions include the Certificate of Achievement for "Outstanding Stepping Contribution" given by Florida Steppers International, Inc., the Certificate of Achievement for "Outstanding Achievement in Chicago-Style Stepping" given by the Majestic Gents, the 2016 Juneteenth Freedom Day Impact Award given by the Stepp-up Steppers of Texas, and the 2016 "We Live in Color" Humanitarian Award.

All in all, Marzette Griffith is an immensely gifted and versatile artist. He is known for his captivating stage presence, suave dance moves, unique sound, and remarkable vocal range. It's rare for one to possess the capabilities that his voice does. He can sing R&B, Jazz, Blues, and Pop, but he is also celebrated for something other than his talents: his passion to help others. Marzette Griffith's desire to give back has led him on a journey to encourage young, aspiring vocalists to pursue their dreams. Weekly, he donates time to offer guidance. It is here that his "reach one, teach one" and "pay it forward" attitude comes out. Due to all of this, many believe that Mr. Marzette Griffith is one of the hardest working men in Chicago.

