

# Vandross tribute recalls singer's gifts

By Debbie Hall  
Sentinel-Voice

The world lost Luther Vandross on July 1, 2005. His inspiring songs and emotionally charged ballads recorded during his four-decade career catapulted him to superstar status with sales of more than 25 million copies, with each one of his 14 albums achieving either platinum or multi-platinum status.

In April 2003, Vandross suffered a debilitating stroke. Still, his "Dance With My Father" album sold nearly a million copies in its first month of release that year. The following year, the album won three Grammy Awards, including song of the year. His eighth and final Grammy came for best R&B performance by a duo with the remake of "The Closer I

Get to You," sung with Beyonce Knowles.

Terry Steele, co-writer of one of Vandross' biggest hits, "Here and Now," and a talented musician in his own right, headlines the commemorative tour, "Celebrate the Music: A Tribute to Luther Vandross." With a live band, back-up singers, dancers and video, Steele brings back the power of Vandross' music with Steele's own personal touches.

Appearing at the South Coast Hotel and Casino recently, the show began with the husband and wife duo of Monty and Kimaya Seward. Opening the show with the gospel tune, "His Truth is Marching On," the opening chorus was low and soulful and built to a hand-clapping R&B rendition that got the

audience moving. Kimaya spoke about being married for 19 years and as a tribute to their love, performed in true R&B style Stevie Wonder's, "All is Fair in Love." Monty then followed up with Wonder's, "Lately," and the two finished with an upbeat version of Sade's, "No Ordinary Love."

A montage of Luther Vandross on the screen lit up the stage with the entrance of back-up singers (including Kimaya) and dancers before Terry Steele came out singing "Stop to Love." Steele continued with "I'm Never Gonna Stop" and "Lucky Guy."

Vandross had recorded some of their covers and Steele performed the Carpenter's "Superstar" with an interpretation by two of



Steele interacted with the audience, dancing, jumping and shaking hands during "Love the One You're With," and he paid homage to the band's drummer with the less familiar but appropriate song called "Miracles." Steele recalled a personal story about how the drummer was told that he would never play the drums again due to an accident. Steele said, "Look at him now," as the drummer jammed.

Since the show was performed before Father's Day, Vandross' last hit, "Dance With My Father," was dedicated to all of the fathers in the audience. The show ended with the audience on their feet singing, "The Power of Love."

Placed at the back of the showroom for audience access, a huge greeting card was signed by Vandross' fans, and it was addressed to the late singer's mother.

The tribute served as a fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association with the auction of lithographs of the score of "Here and Now" autographed from Vandross to Steele. Vandross' health was impaired by diabetes.

the dancers in a dramatic jazz ballet style. With Mariah Carey, Vandross had recorded Lionel Richie and Diana Ross duet, "Endless Love." Steele and Kimaya created the sultry mood of the song with their powerful rendition of a love bigger than life itself.

Steele returned to the stage wearing a rhinestone-studded jacket Vandross purchased for him when "Here and Now" was nominated for a Grammy. Steele asked for a couple truly in love. Two tourists from Mississippi, married for 19 years, were brought on stage as Steele serenaded them with "Here and Now."



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Kimaya Seward, front, and Terry Steele performed during the Luther Vandross tribute.

## Fishburne

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nothing more. He also recalled auditioning for "Death Wish 2."

"Here I had worked with one of the greatest directors on one of the most critically acclaimed films and now I was auditioning for a role as a rapist in "Death Wish 2." So, I raped a chair and [acted the role] very well."

He spoke at great length about working with John Singleton, director of "Boyz n the Hood," who was only 24 years old at the time. Fishburne also talked about working with Clint Eastwood as a director who never wants to interfere with his actors. Fishburne recalled, "Clint would say 'okay' and 'start.' Then he will say 'stop.' He doesn't like to disturb actors with any unnecessary intrusions." In conclusion, Fishburne said that, "Acting is about finding time, rhythms, colors, textures, tempo, feeling... It's all about feeling." He also stated, "An actor needs a love of language and [the knowledge to] use words well."

It was another standing ovation for Fishburne with two new movies due to be

released over the summer months, "Five Fingers" and the "Death and Life of Bobby Z."

CineVegas was created six years ago by an enthusiastic group of film and art lovers, independent filmmakers, and movie industry veterans.

It first took place at Bally's Hotel and Casino. With financial backing from Las Vegas Events, local businesses and patrons, Bally's showroom and convention spaces were transformed into movie theatres and screening rooms.

In 2002, CineVegas joined forces with The Entertainment Development Corporation, a non-profit agency with a mission to bring entertainment-based business to the Southern Nevada area. Under the direction of the staff of EDC and the CineVegas Advisory Board, the Festival moved to The Palms Casino Resort and Brenden Theatres.

Hopper received the Marquee Award, and was so enamored of the festival that today he is the Chair of the CineVegas Film Festival Creative Advisory Board. For more information go to [www.cinevegas.com](http://www.cinevegas.com).

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