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It's about time for Hub singer Wilson

Robin Hamilton

Some artists believe there comes a point in life where taking a chance matters most.

For Athene Wilson, that time is now, reflected in her debut album, aptly titled "It's About Time."

The Jamaican born, Boston resident released her new album after spending more than a year collaborating with producers and recording in the studio.

"It was a journey, really," she says. "I've been singing since I was 7."

The journey was paved by nearly two decades of paying dues on the music scene as a back-up performer, and studying under the tutelage of others. She has performed with artists like Patti LaBelle and Smokey Robinson, and for local stars like Larry Watson.

Watson is credited as one of the most influential mentors in her career. The singer admits she met him years ago when she went to see him perform in downtown Boston. She remembers a mutual friend mentioning to Watson that she could sing, so he pulled her up on stage, unexpectedly.

"I remember after I sang, he snatched the mic away from me and said 'You need your own show!'" she recalls, laughing. "Ever since then, Larry took me under his wing, and he got me singing professionally. He built my confidence up, as far as going out and singing."

The compliment was no small one, coming from Watson. He is a performer who has traveled the world and professes the importance of using music to educate people about black history.

"We are vehicles and vessels for social change," he says. "I think it is critical that we pass the torch on to young artists who are not only very talented, but recognize that art is not just about them."

Watson, who is both a professor and a performer, emphasizes the importance of mentoring other artists in the making.

"I immediately took her under my wing," he said. "And Athene was doing a lot of the work that I had done. I realized that Athene's voice was too huge to



(Photo courtesy of Athene Wilson)

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Milton Academy recruiter is 'just always singing'

During week days, Lori Dow spends hours working in the admissions office of Milton Academy's Upper School. But on many nights, Dow may be found doing what she loves best — singing. [More »](#)

Beantown singer still shooting for the stars

In 2006, Lee Wilson was hailed by Vibe magazine as the "Top Unsigned Artist in America." Since then, the Dorchester native has appeared as a guest performer on BET and the "Fox 25 Morning News," toured the East Coast, endured rejection and

be singing background. I told her to really pursue her own thing. And I love her dearly, and I think she is one of the best singers in the country, and one of the best in New England."

For Wilson, having people like Watson behind her has helped put her in the loop. One of her most memorable performances came when she was called to help a little girl sing the National Anthem while then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama campaigned in Massachusetts during his run for the presidency.

"I had a friend call me, and then tell me, 'we need you.' So, I gave the girl a little boost, and we sang it together," she recalls.

The duo had the chance to meet Obama backstage after the performance. "He just bounded off the stage and shook our hands," she says. "The charisma you see on TV is even more in person."

Wilson admits she was so impressed that she wrote a song "Yes We Can" that is on her new release.

The 13-track album is a mix of R&B, gospel, jazz and a little reggae. She doesn't worry that the diversity will confuse listeners. It's "an eclectic mix," she explains. "I want to showcase my diversity as a performer."

Wilson says she has a number of performances scheduled in the next couple of months, including a show at Slade's, the popular Roxbury night club. She is also slated to appear at the Cape Cod Jazz Festival over the summer.

While she is planning more events in the future, she says she is just excited for what this new phase of her career will hold.

In her own words, it's about time.



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