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Gita to perform tribute for Quincy Jones

Gita Blakeney-Saltus, Bermuda's internationally acclaimed jazz singer, has been chosen to perform a special two-song tribute to music legend Quincy Jones during next week's Bermuda Music Festival.

Gita will sing the songs to the 27-time Grammy Award winner during the Friday night show after Premier Dr. Ewart Brown has presented Quincy Jones with the African Diaspora Heritage Trail Award. The award honours Quincy Jones' lifetime contributions to culture and humanity.

"It is a great honour for me to sing to Quincy," said a thrilled Gita. "It is not only a special occasion for me but for Bermuda. This award is a gift to Quincy from all of our community and I am honoured and excited to be playing a part." Gita is also a board member of the African Diaspora Heritage Trail Foundation.

Quincy Jones said: "Art is the supreme unifier on this planet. The greatest gift I've had in my life has been to travel as much as I have and to meet as many people as I have. Bermuda will be no exception. I look forward to experiencing the culture of Bermuda for the very first time and hearing the Island's very own Gita Blakeney-Saltus perform at the festival."

Premier Ewart F. Brown commented: "I know our country will be well represented, and all in attendance enthralled when Bermuda's Lady of Song Gita takes centre stage to serenade Quincy Jones as part of our special honour that he so richly deserves."

"It's a unique opportunity for me," added Gita, who has worked with the late Isaac Hayes, and opened for stars like Gladys Knight, Jonathan Butler, Lee Ritenour, Herbie Mann, Cassandra Wilson, Chris Botti and Angie Stone. "The man is a living legend and I'm a huge fan of his. If I had to pick anyone internationally to work with it would be Quincy because his work spans such a huge spectrum, from his early work with jazz stars like Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Shirley Horn to the work he did with Michael Jackson. He is the quintessential producer and his work really embodies the evolution of modern music."

Although Gita will be accompanied by Quincy Jones' orchestra, the songs will remain a secret to the great man until the night. She explained: "Greg Phillinganes, Quincy's musical director, assisted in the song selections. All I will say is that one song is taken from Quincy's 1974 album *Body Heat* and the other is a real surprise from my heart!"

She added: "The songs reflect my affinity for Quincy's work because we both have our roots in jazz. It really is a dream come true to be able to work with someone of his vast experience and historical musical status."

Phillinganes says: "Gita's voice totally lives up to the meaning of her name ... she is a song from God." [Gita in Hindi means "song of God"]. It's high praise indeed - Phillinganes is one of the industry's most in-demand session keyboardists and has worked with Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton; played on Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, *Bad*, *Dangerous* and *Off The Wall* albums, and appears on Rod Stewart's upcoming *Soulbook* release.



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