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***PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release***

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**GLEND A COLLENS set to star at SONGBIRDS...*live*<sup>TM</sup> in July**

Glenda Collens will be the next vocalist performing at the 2010 edition of **SONGBIRDS... *live*<sup>TM</sup>**, the concert series produced by Production One Ltd., featuring new Caribbean female vocalists at the Sky View Lounge, Cascadia Hotel, on **Wednesday 07, July from 8:00 pm**. This prodigious entertainment polymath—singer, vocal coach, choir director, musical theatre producer, arranger and conductor—and former Digicel Rising Stars judge, far from being unheralded, will be showcased in a new light where the solo voice of the Caribbean female vocalist is emphasised. Her clear voice can turn the ordinary song into a deeply moving and individual piece that reflects her continuing journey as an entertainer in Trinidad and Tobago.

Glenda Collens says her passion for music started at birth, as she believes she came out of the womb singing, although the doctors and her mother would probably say she was crying. While she sang everywhere and anywhere, and especially for friends visiting her family home, she remembers her earliest stage performance was at age 7 on the Aunty Kay show followed seven years later with an appearance at the Vienna Music Festival, Austria, and at age 16 she debuted in her first operatic role at Queen's Hall as a member of the Trinidad Opera Company.

Those around her often criticized her love of classical music while growing up: “They used to say that I am a little black girl from Morvant and I am not supposed to be singing this type of music.” Her mother who had come from Grenada, already pregnant with her, seeking a better life away from the cocoa plantation, told her she could be anything she wanted to be. When a friend gave her the gift of a recording by black American soprano Leontyne Price, and she saw the image of Leontyne's black skin and Afro hairstyle, and listened to her dramatic voice, the young soprano from Morvant was convinced that her dreams could be a reality.

After high school she pursued her dreams to New York, working at a French pastry shop in the morning for minimum wage, and attending a Vocal Masterclass at Harlem School for the Arts on evenings. After her first term her teacher at Harlem School for the Arts sent her to audition for Manhattan School of Music, she was accepted but did not have the funds to pay for her tuition. The school, on learning this, placed her in a special outreach program for talented young singers for two years. Glenda was later recruited to Boston University on a full four-year scholarship where she earned her BA in Voice Performance.

While at college studying voice, tuberculosis threatened to cripple her career, the prognosis by the doctors was: “You may never sing again.” Her lungs were permanently scared and her larynx weakened but she faced the odds, fought back and returned to the music scene despite the odds,



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though a rigorous, two-year regime of medication, speech therapy and a complete rebuilding of her vocal techniques, she fully recovered her voice and is singing again, but her dreams of life as an opera singer ended after this illness.

Undaunted by the monumental challenge to continue her life as a vocalist after completing her studies, she returned to Trinidad and set out to create her own musical experience. On her return and finding that the Trinidad Opera Company was now defunct, she switched musical tracks in an effort to remain in Trinidad with her husband and young son rather than head abroad again to pursue her musical aspirations. She successfully taught herself to play the piano to be a fully self-sufficient musician: “I started playing the piano exactly one year ago out of frustration; I couldn't get anyone to accompany or work with me on a regular basis and my music and career were suffering. It was born out of a necessity to be a fully self-sufficient musician. I wanted to be able to sing and play my music and not be dependent on any other musician for my lively hood, as had been the case.” Her band MEDEA was born out of that necessity. She chooses her music which is a collection of Funk, R&B, New-Soul and Jazz by singers she considers to be masters of the art including Jill Scott, Stevie Wonder and Joan Armatrading, paying homage to the songwriter by performing their works - but she does it in her own inimitable style.

She describes herself as driven because there is a fire inside that would not be quenched: “When I get dismissals, when I get confronted by negativity and by what often seem to be insurmountable set backs, it is like a fuel to my fire. All I've ever wanted to do is sing, I will be very happy to be in my house and sing all day long.”

**SONGBIRDS...live™** features, from June to December on the first Wednesday of the month, some of the most notable upcoming and unheralded female voices in contemporary music in Trinidad and Tobago with an ear turned to Jazz and World Music. The musical range, from world jazz to neo-soul to quiet storm, places **SONGBIRDS...live™** in a position far separate from the plethora of jazz gigs popping up around the city of Port of Spain. These smaller productions from Production One Ltd. serve as a platform for the recording of the singers and their performances.

Tickets for **SONGBIRDS...live™** are \$100.00 and are available by calling 620-6920, or online at <http://songbirdslive2010.eventbrite.com/> or at the door on the night of the performance. For more information and to listen to tracks by the artists visit the website, <http://www.songbirdslive.com>

You can also visit our Facebook page.

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