

# Cheri Maree

## The Love Goddess Heals, Energizes, and Inspires from Center Stage



By Perdita B. Spriggs

Silky “souljazz” artist Cheri Maree channels an old school, new school, sophisticated sound that’s reminiscent of renaissance jazz and soulful rhythm and blues from back in the day. Her voice croons from a place deep within her center, her soul freely radiating love that transforms life’s disappointments into healing truths. No surprise “The Love Goddess” is returning to center stage, bringing a soothing message that transcends all boundaries.

Cheri Maree’s “Enchanted Love Tour” August kick-off marked her much anticipated return to the music circuit. Appropriately launched in her Columbia, South Carolina, hometown and sponsored by Anita Brewer’s 5th Annual Jumping the Broom Bridal Show, Cheri Maree personally designed this global lovefest to touch lives and revive an era of personal rebirth.

“Music helps us to move through challenges and make positive changes in our lives,” believes the internationally recognized powerhouse performer who uses her gifts to motivate and inspire.

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—Cheri Maree

### Music Brings Incredible Peace

Born in Muncie, Indiana, Cheri Maree spent her early years in Chicago and later Columbia. She always knew music spoke to her heart, connecting her gift of song to an “indescribable peace that feels so yummy and good.”

Cheri Maree embraced her vocal talents early, realizing people responded positively to the power of music. “I sang in our church choir, talent contests, and local bands,” she remembers. “I knew music was my calling.”

Music was in her heart, but when Cheri Maree

graduated from W.J. Keenan High School and entered the University of South Carolina in Columbia, her sights were set on becoming a marine biologist. But music’s strong pull led to her audition at the university’s school of music, where a pessimistic professor suggested the young singer choose another profession. He lit a fire in her and she was determined to, “persevere and pursue my dreams.” Cheri Maree finished the semester, and with her mother’s reluctant blessing, set out to make music her life.



CHERI MAREE

High school friend and women’s empowerment coach Angela Carr Patterson knew Cheri Maree’s infectious smile and grounded personality would carve a sweet niche in the music world. “Her sound comes from a real deep place, and she means to inspire and transform your heart.” Angela would be the connection between Cheri Maree and Mo Pleasure, renowned producer and keyboardist for Michael Jackson’s final “This Is It” tour.

### Life Speaks in Soprano and Bass

Cheri Maree embarked on a musical journey that would change her life. Columbia’s well-known music influencers and promoters connected her to the city’s thriving circuit. “I got my intro to jazz, thanks to James Hemmingway and Roland Hayes, and my career just morphed,” reflects the humanitarian songbird, whose vocal range spans jazz, rock, soul, and gospel. She would also meet her husband, Robert Newton, III, and together with their band Lotusfete (meaning celebration of the spirit), they would share the stage with A-list artists including Patti LaBelle and the O’Jays.

Cheri Maree has kept company with Grammy winning artists Al Jarreau, Hootie and the Blowfish, and Brian McKnight, just to name a few. When opening for legendary acts, “I would get close to the stage to watch and see how they communicated with everyone, from their assistants and stage hands to the audience.” A chance encounter with Ms. LaBelle would leave an indelible impression on the

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young starlet. “In true Patti-style, she showed me how to treat people, how to let them know they matter.”

Cheri Maree blossomed into a sought after, multi-talented vocalist and musician whose eclectic sound and style enthralled hometown crowds and wowed international fans. However, a trip to Japan deeply impacted the new mother and forced life-changing decisions. She candidly remembers, “It wore my heart out to leave my daughters while on tour. I knew I had to make a choice.” For 17 years, Cheri Maree sidestepped her career and embraced full-

time motherhood, shepherding her five “children from my heart and children from my womb.”

Cheri Maree prepared to re-surface her dream deferred with her two youngest daughters in high school, but life had other plans. Her marriage ended and her husband’s subsequent prolonged illness and death would again change her path. During her lowest personal and financial



Photos courtesy of Cheri Maree

moments, she would question how her music career could survive.

“I was so deeply wounded, but held onto my faith and rededicated myself to my purpose and my truth,” shares Cheri Maree, following divine instructions to regain her singing breath. “We all have a story. It’s what we do in those moments that really makes a difference.” Time and determination would raise this phoenix from the ashes – into her time to shine.

World-class groove master and drumming sensation John Blackwell, who is the “go-to” drummer for celebrity artists including Prince and Justin Timberlake, got his hometown start with Lotusfete and considers Cheri Maree among his inner circle. “Cheri’s always had a great stage presence and a phenomenal voice. I know she’s doing it up.”

### Music Makes the World Go Round

Cheri Maree has kept her musical notes tuned, performing at the prestigious Carnegie Hall with the Peacemakers Choir, singing a vocal score composed and conducted by the world renowned Karl Jenkins.

When Harvey Elwood, Jr., owner of WOCS 93.7 FM in

Orangeburg, South Carolina, met Cheri Maree, he instantly recognized her old school flavor and sophistication from his days promoting R&B greats like Chaka Khan and Teddy Pendergrass. “Her style has a jazzy, bistro feel that people love. Cheri Maree is a genuine class act.”

Just off an 8-city tour of Russia, The Love Goddess’ musical magic still connects on a soul level. “Everywhere I go, people want to feel loved,” says Cheri Maree, who teamed up with Russian musicians and interpreters to share her message. “Language is never a barrier because we all connect musically.”

A recent relocation to Atlanta has fueled Cheri Maree’s passionate rebirth, pairing her with some of the industry’s best. Mo Pleasure produced the phenomenal upcoming single “Revival of a Love Story” headlining her sophomore CD “360 Degree Woman - Rebirth.” Mo feels Cheri Maree, “has so much soul and comes with the real, like Jill Scott. She doesn’t fit a mold, but brings her own style.”

Her trilogy of projects over the next five years promises Cheri Maree at her best, digging into her soul, owning her future, and living her divine purpose. ■

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