

Big Band Bobby

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We've all heard his hit "What You Won't Do For Love," but not many of us have heard it live! Bobby Caldwell, one of the most respected members of the music industry, will headline the American Cancer Society's Jewel Ball Saturday, April 18 at the Intercontinental Montelucia Resort & Spa in Paradise Valley. Guests can expect an amazing night of jazz, including a 17-piece big band. We got the chance to ask Caldwell a few questions, and learned about his childhood dreams, how he became a musical icon, his inspirations and how he has personally been affected by cancer.



Q. At age 7, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A. At that age I wanted to be Superman. Let's face it, he was cool!

Q. What was your childhood nickname?

A. I've been "Bobby" my entire life.

Q. What was your first job?

A. At age 14 my garage band and I played sock hops. I don't recall getting paid, but we considered these gigs to be "jobs".

Q. How did you get started in music?

A. Music was genetically unavoidable for me. Both my mom and dad were singers and actors. They met during a Summer Stock production, and soon had their own TV show called, "Suppertime" on the old Dumont Network. Our house was always filled with singers and musicians. I was raised on the standards, of Cole Porter, Harold Arlene and Sammy Cahn to name a few. I loved Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald. In my early teens I became a huge fan of the Beatles, and mowed all the lawns in the neighborhood to buy my first guitar. I taught myself to play virtually every Beatles tune ever recorded. I also learned to play piano. After high school graduation, my band and I headed to Los Angeles and played the club circuit for several years. During that time I began writing my own music. When I returned to my home in Miami, Florida in 1978, I landed a record deal with TK, and released, "What You Won't Do for Love". I haven't looked back. My entire life has been music.

Q. Who has been an inspiration to you in your work?

A. As a performer, I find Sinatra to be my number one inspiration. As far as songwriting goes, Lennon and McCartney are beyond inspirational. Their work is legendary.

Q. What are the 5 most played songs on your ipod (or what is the most played CD you own?)

A. "Our Town" – Sinatra; "If I Fell" – The Beatles; "Don't You Be That Way" – Ella Fitzgerald; "I.G.Y." – Donald Fagen; "Can't Hide Love" – Earth, Wind and Fire.

Q. Who are some of your favorite musicians?

A. I admire many musicians, and I have had the pleasure of working with many talented people. I admire Jeff Beck's guitar prowess, and on piano, Oscar Peterson was truly amazing.

Q. How do you like to spend your "free-time"?

A. We live on a peaceful horse farm in Northwest New Jersey. Our free time is spent at home. We do a lot of entertaining and cooking. We have three great teen-age daughters, and wonderful neighbors. Being at home is a great place to be.

Q. Where was the most memorable place you performed?

A. I have had the pleasure of playing many great venues in the US and Japan. The audiences always make it a memorable experience. I did have the honor of performing on The Mall in Washington, DC on the Fourth of July. That was very enjoyable for both me and my family. The fireworks display was unbelievable.

Q. Have you been effected by cancer?

A. I lost my dad to cancer. Several close friends of mine have been lost to cancer. However, I have some close friends right now, who have fought the battle and won. It's encouraging to see the progress that's been made in treating this disease, and hopefully, we'll see more and more success and ultimately a cure.