

GLORIA JONES

By Helen Marketti

Originally, from Cincinnati, Ohio Gloria Jones knew in her heart that music would be the driving force of her life. She was the original singer for the song, "Tainted Love" in



Marc Bolan & Gloria Jones, 1975 (photographer, Tom Aris)

1964 which later became a hit for 80s music group, Soft Cell. She was also the soul mate of Marc Bolan (T. Rex) and together they forged a union of love and music that she still carries in her heart and in her work.

"When I was growing up, the artist that had the most impact on me was Frankie Laine," said Gloria. "Listening to the radio back then was important and I loved listening to him sing, "when I lost my baby, I almost lost my mind."

Eventually, Gloria's family moved to Los Angeles and it was there that her music career really took off. "I was always singing, even at an early age. I also took classical piano lessons at the age of seven," said Gloria. "I was in a teenage gospel group that consisted of Billy Preston, Andrae Crouch, Edna Wright and Frankie Karl. I have to say we were very talented and sounded really good."

In 1964, Gloria met Berry Gordy (Motown Records). It was through him that she was able to meet producers and songwriters. She was also a songwriter for a while at Motown and wrote with Pam Sawyer. "I always like working on melodies," said Gloria. "I like to collaborate and think about what women are thinking. For me, when writing music, it's the notes and words talking to each other." Gloria's talented songwriting contributions for

Motown were utilized by Gladys Knight & The Pips, The Jackson 5 and many more.

Gloria was the original singer for "Tainted Love" in 1964. "At first, I really didn't like the song because of its words. I didn't like the word "tainted". I had no idea it would be a hit. A song to use the word "tainted" in 1964 was a little ahead of its time."

Many will recognize the song, "Tainted Love" by 80s music group, Soft Cell. Gloria shares the story of how the group recorded her song. "I had attended a 60s themed party in Northern England. The DJ for the party played my version of "Tainted Love". Marc Almond (Soft Cell) was working the cloakroom that evening and when he heard the song, he ran over to the DJ saying he wanted a copy of that song because his band would like it.

After that, they did their version of it and that's how it came to be. There are several versions of the song out there, I really like Marilyn Manson's version. I feel him; I think he is very soulful. I like his interpretation of the song. I thought he would do a rock version of it but he did R & B instead."



Students at Marc Bolan School of Music & Film, 2012 (photographer is unknown)

Gloria was a backup singer for Bob Dylan on his "Brothers & Sisters" album. She has also sung back up for the Rolling Stones and has done a duet with the late Harry Nilsson called, "What's Your Sign?" on his Duit on Mon Dei album.

In 1968, Gloria was first introduced to Marc Bolan at a party. She was in the original cast of HAIR at the time. They met again in

London at a club called the Speakeasy. The third time they crossed paths, Gloria was one of the backup singers for T. Rex. Gloria recalls, "The third time we met it was like magic. Meeting Marc was meeting my soul mate." Gloria and Marc had a son, Rolan who is now pursuing a music career of his own.

Marc Bolan was known for his glam rock style and was never afraid to stretch limitations. "Marc always had a sense of style and fashion," said Gloria. "He loved wearing the feathered boas, glitter and mascara because he was a true artist. He was the original "glam rock" and never felt intimidated or embarrassed."

Gloria currently lives in Sierra Leone, West Africa where the Marc Bolan School of Music & Film is being built. "Marc always loved children," said Gloria. "The decision to build the school in Sierra Leone came after my son Rolan visited the area and the children said "don't forget us". There was a civil war going on there and many of the children were being trained to be soldiers, which naturally made everyone afraid of them. We decided how wonderful it would be to work with these children and replace the weapons with instruments. These children are like Marc, they are fearless and successful. I know he would be very happy."

In addition to continuing the project of the Marc Bolan School of Music & Film, Gloria has several other projects in the works. "There is going to be a biopic out of England about Marc. Rolan and I are advisors to the film," she said. "I am also working on a documentary about my life, which will be released on DVD with proceeds going to the children for Marc's school. My son, Rolan, is a very talented and creative musician. He has to find his own individuality without the influence of Marc or me. When he is ready to go on tour, I have been encouraging him to come to Cleveland. Marc loved coming to Cleveland, he felt free there."

For more information:
www.marcbolanschool.org
Rolan Feld Bolan is on Facebook

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