

Who Really Runs Boston?

The Truth About Donnie McClurkin's Cancelled Performance

On July 18, 2010, Boston's 10th Annual GospelFest was set in motion for the high praising, song singing, hands lifted event that has become one that many people in Boston and surrounding areas look forward to. This year should have been no different! Unfortunately it was. Not because of the wonderful performers who were there nor because of the vendor booths whose food you could smell a mile away, but different because of the 'Off, Then On Again, Once Was Cancelled, Now Has Been Rescheduled' commotion that surrounded one particular artist who though he is an anointed, well-known, highly respected and adored performer. He has albums that have sold millions of copies, he has appeared in numerous films, and he is a judge on BET's hit TV show Sunday's Best. His experience has helped aspiring vocalist to reach plateaus that were once only dreamed of and he also hosts a weekly radio show aired on 100 stations nationwide, yet and still, almost didn't make it. Could it be that his credentials weren't good enough? Nawh, that couldn't have been it. Maybe it was the hundreds of thousands of fans who would have come to the event just to see him, which in turn would have only aided in the financial stability of the vendors at this event... Nope, that couldn't be it either. Oh I got it! Maybe he wasn't going to come because he was too heartbroken that the Celtics lost the championship series to the Lakers and he's still in mourning? Nada, not hardly, and wrong again. The reason why Pastor/Author/Artist Donnie McClurkin's performance was originally cancelled for this year's 'holy' event was due to the stir that murmured within the gay and lesbian community and said to have been spear-headed by the 'Rev'. Irene Monroe. Reverend? Really? Ok, I have to take a breather and digress at this moment, because while I could write until my fingers are jammed and bent like Captain Hook off of that one line alone, it is with 'loving kindness' that the good book states that people will be drawn. So instead of spending precious moments discussing the foolishness that have gone on in church for too long, I rather invest this time to tell you the truth of Mr. McClurkin. Who knows, the 'wind' might blow me back to Ms. Monroe, but for now, back to the matter at hand.

During the month of June, many community leaders and gay right activist began to cry out that they did not want Mr. McClurkin to appear at this year's GospelFest because they have labeled McClurkin as a 'homophobe' and said his 'anti-gay message' has no place at a gospel event. Now, I know that there are some people reading this who cant wait to jump on the "she said 'they', so she must be a gay basher too" bandwagon, so let me lay down the clarifications and guidelines for this article. Kind of like when reading a contract, certain words such as 'they', 'participant', 'co-signer' and 'borrower' are printed in bold with explanations so that everone reading can be on the same page, yeah, well I'm going to do the same for you so there aren't any misunderstandings.

They: The Gay/Lesbian Community
She: Ms. Irene Monroe
Period.

They is not stated in a derogatory manner used to describe a detested group of individuals, but a definition of the group who is responsible for this incident and She, being the reported ring leader who was quoted saying, "The queer community will come out and boo." Nice quote 'reverend', but like I said, I'll get to that later.

For now, like The Roots, I shall proceed. Mr. McClurkin gets casted aside, a decision that was made from none other than Mayor Tom Menino, which leads me to the question-



Who's Really Running Boston? Guess it stands to reason, that anyone can make a little noise and Mayor Menino will perform a puppeted-like dance on cue. Hmmm, let's go alittle deeper folks. You can have a rapper with his pants hanging off of his hips, showing his blessed assurance, come to Boston; yelling lyrics that glorify drugs, sex, crime, and murder and Mayor Menino nor anyone in office, has a problem with that, but bring in a man for the GospelFest who actually represents the very definition of the word 'gospel', which according to Webster's is defined as, "The four books in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that tell the story of Christ's life and teachings", and that's the cat the mayor and his mind-boggling followers decide TO HAVE BEEF with. Really? At this point this 'almost-too-ridiculous-to-be-true' story is starting to actually make me laugh from the incredible level of nonsense that I'm reporting on, but yet, in true Black Thought fashion, I shall proceed. (guess by now, you've been able to tell The Roots and members there of are one of my favorite groups). Maybe it's just me, but I believe in taking even the most complex situations and reducing it to the LCD of a matter- the Lowest Common Denominator. In this case, the example would simply be this: A city that I resided in was hosting an event whose stage was set to have the following- a Jazz artist, a Neo-Soul artist, an R & B artist and a speaker from the KKK. The wonderful thing about having feet is its ability to assist in me walking away at ANY given time. For my wheelchair peeps, roll away. What ever means you use, I'm just thinking, that I would probably hang around for the first 3 individuals, but before the white-clothed, 3 holed-hood had a chance to rest on the KKK speaker's head, I'd be in my car,

probably listening to N’dambi, Maysa or...The Roots (lol), driving off, still happy and enjoying my day. I wouldn’t throw bottles at dude’s head. I wouldn’t sit there screaming and getting hoarse while chanting ‘Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud’. I wouldn’t even waste my energy giving that dude one nano-second of my life trying to stop him from the evil that he has chosen to embrace. Nope folks, I’d just leave. That doesn’t mean, I wouldn’t go on the radio to discuss what happened, doesn’t even mean I wouldn’t write into a well-known circulated publication as to the hatred that still presents itself in this day and age, but actually protesting and stopping a peaceful gathering that offered no threat to my life nor the lives of others, nawh, not hardly.

So I’m here to set the record straight and to give everyone a true depiction of the man who was verbally stoned and casted away (as if the very people who threw the stones don’t live in an extremely weak structured glass house).

I’ve had the privilege of hearing Pastor McClurkin’s message on two separate occasions. Not a concert, but an actual purposely preached, no, taught sermon. On both dates, I was astonished to hear this amazing testimony. A testimony that spoke to such saddness of his sexually abused childhood, to the identity crisis he felt held him captive to the victorious declaration of the freedom he found in Christ. Now you may be thinking “Why is Sky bolding everthing?”, simply to illustrate that on both occasions, Pastor McClurkin didn’t come at the audience with some ‘If you’re gay, you’re going to hell’, ‘If you are a lesbian, in hell shall you wake,’ nor ‘If you’re happily gay and you know it clap your hands’ type of message. No, what the author/artist spoke were words that resounded love and spake to the very heart of those broken souls that have battled with an inward struggle of ‘whatever’. Whether that ‘whatever’ was shame, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, physical abuse and yes, even homosexuality. He told the audience how he found relief from the inward torment and unfulfillment that he carried for so many years and that you too (whomever ‘you’ may be, not just gays and lesbians), can have the same relief, freedom, joy and fulfillment. By the end of his message, what happened next, caused anyone with the human capacity to breathe to rejoice and stand in awe, as hundreds of people came to the alter. Some people came for prayer, some to receive Christ as their saviour, some just to cry and have someone put their arms around them. I watched and cried in amazement that in this particular sanctuary there were staircases on both sides and I saw people- young, old, black & non African-American line up alongside the staircase just to say, ‘Here I am. I want that too!’

So, in closing I’ll say this. It breaks my heart to see how the church has been tainted with lies, politics, false-a-ying (not prophesying) fake speakers, praise leaders and dance leapers. While I thank God that all churches are not like that, it breaks my heart that because some are, the very souls that need and who want God, are looking at ‘His’ people and are able to say ‘they are doing the same thing that I’m doing. If they don’t have enough power to save their own soul, why would I trust them with mine?’ Now, I told you earlier if the ‘wind’ blew me in the direction of Ms., not reverend, Monroe, I’d speak on it- well here it is. The fact that she actually wears a title that is even remotely associated with what society recognizes as a symbol of one who is a follower of Christ, causes me to almost vomit. Not because out of hate for her, but because the very teachings of God is, and yes, I’m saying it, is against the very nature of homosexuality. BUT, here’s the difference that people

seem to miss- God never once said he hated the person, he simply hated the sin. So to re-establish His people, he sent his innocent son, Jesus, to shed blood to wash away every sin and to give His people a new start, a new and abundant life. Period. He said, “with loving kindness have I drawn thee”, so while it’s not God’s will for any man to perish, He still gave you free will. A choice to either say, I’m on the Lord’s side or I’m not. Not a ‘version’ of the Lord’s side (as if there was such a thing), but a commitment to uphold his teachings- all of them. Not the part you ‘want’ to believe in nor the watered-down, tainted, twisted theology of His word used to passify or excuse your behaviors. Understand this, I’m not here to get up on some soapbox, but I will say this, the BIBLE says that it’s God’s will that no man should perish, but that he has instructed Hell to enlarge its walls. In this world, you have a choice. Rather you believe in God or not, that’s your business or more of a Clint Eastwood, ‘Do You Feel Lucky’ thought process. I can’t tell you if hell really exists because I’ve never been, but since I’ve never been a strong gambler; my life is just too valuable to place that type of wager. It’s easier for me to love the Lord and accept Him as my Lord and Savior, than it is to ‘play’ with it and in the end ‘hope’ that hell was just a made up fairy-tale, with the mean ol’ dragon, played by the role of some pitch-fork holding dude with horns. So Ms. Monroe, if you really want to wear a title that serves notice of one who follows Christ, then just for fun, try doing it. I’m not sure if that little story of Sodom & Gomarrah (Genesis chapters 18 & 19) was just a hyped up fable to you, but the fact that you are ‘leading’ people to a false reality of what God truly stands for, is for lack of better words, just plain ol’ sad. I don’t have to preach to you dear readers, the same book says in Ephesians 1:17-18:

‘That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,’

Basically stating, you can try Him out for yourself. I think that the same God who created this world, is big enough to prove to you who He really is.

So, now that the truth about Mr. McClurkin has been reported, can we finally rise above the non-sense; put away the stones, false accusations, and verbal assassinations on Pastor/Author/ Artist Donnie McClurkin. A man whose only message is about what HE went through and the joy and wholeness that HE found in HIS Lord. If you want the same thing, cool, the door is always open, if you choose not to, that’s cool as well. Just ask yourself, ‘do you feel lucky?’

If you still don’t trust that Mr. McClurkin is about love and not gay-bashing, then I’ll go one step further and leave you with the very words from his website:

‘The themes of the 12-song We All Are One are of unity and tolerance. Donnie explains, “Jesus said, ‘A house divided against itself cannot stand,’ yet we remain disconnected: Republicans and Democrats, Blacks, Whites, Yellows and Browns, Baptists and Methodists, Lutherans and Episcopalians...Where is the unity? Coming from a religious background, I was taught to judge harshly, but my thinking now is, ‘Let God do the judging so that I may learn how to love and understand the ways in which we are all connected.’ •SK

NEO SOUL'S 5TH ELEMENT

With a mix of soul, funk, electronic, and alternative music, Amp Fiddler is the next best soul star on the rise. Singer, songwriter, keyboardist, and producer, Amp Fiddler has incredible and undeniable talents which stand above the norm. Amp, among his many great musical capabilities, also has a remarkable disposition.

Born Joseph “Amp” Fiddler, during a recent interview the soulful crooner was asked, *“where did the stage name Amp derive from?* He states, *“Well I’m from Detroit and Amp was a nickname, my middle name is Anthony and there were like two other kids with the name Anthony, so I just shortened it to Amp.”*

Raised in Michigan, Amp grew up listening to some incredible music artists. Amp credits Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Marvin Gaye, and the late great Michael Jackson as some of his many musical influences in which have impacted his life.

Amp has a prominent career; he has conducted three albums: **Waltz of a Ghetto Fly** (2004), **Afro Strut** (2006), and **Inspiration Information** (2008). A few of his upbeat, mid-tempo collection of hits includes *“Dreamin’,” “Eye to Eye,” “Hope/Dope,” and “If I Don’t”* featuring Corrine Bailey Rae.

Amp Fiddler’s vocal skills are intact, ethical and unprecedented. Listening to Amp’s music is euphonious and smooth, which is guaranteed to put anyone in a great mood, no matter what type of music you prefer to listen to. His songs talk about everyday life

experiences that people encounter, such as love/romance and relationships.

Based on his diverse creativity, it is evident that Amp’s artistic savviness blends in with his talent and edgy style. The Detroit native points out that, *“I’m always trying to create something that is different.”*

Innovation and creativity are two strongpoints in which Amp considers when writing his music. *“Growing up in Detroit, I always felt that it was best to be different and the word innovation has always been stuck in my head.”* He strongly emphasizes, *“although it is a challenge to be different, it’s ok to fit into different music categories because you have to be relative to people’s listening, because as a music artist, you have to have elements people can connect to.”*

“Not” from his second solo album **Afro Strut** is one of Amp’s favorite songs to perform because he states that, *“the song lyrics are nice and overall, it is always fun to play.”* He also credits **“Waltz of a Ghetto Fly”** as being a special song of his to sing because he teamed up with hip-hop producer J. Dilla on the track. If given the opportunity, Amp says that he would like to work with influential artists Prince, Fly Stone, and Pharrell on future projects.

With Amp Fiddler’s preposterous sense of direction and unquestionable talent and poise, there is no slowing down this hard-working, soulful singer. • **Tiffani Best**

