

Herald Arts & Life



COMING FRIDAY
Classified speaks to the Chronicle Herald about his new album

5 SHOWS TO WATCH TONIGHT

HEROES REBORN

Company Woman
Global, 9 p.m.

FIRSTHAND

Hold Your Fire
CBC, 9 p.m.

THE GOLDBERGS

Baio and Switch
CTV, 9:30 p.m.

LIFE IN PIECES

New
CBS, 9:30 p.m.

COLONY

Pilot, premiere
Bravo, 11 p.m.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. TRIBUTE



Dutch Robinson is in Halifax for The Dream Continues tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium on Saturday.

Robinson's big Dream

Musician, actor always glad to have a reason to be in his second home — Halifax

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

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Although Dutch Robinson moved west to Vancouver, the East Coast is in his thoughts every day.

First and foremost, for his sons, Cinnamon and Cherokee, who

live in Halifax, and also for his musical friends in the cultural stage show DRUM! and the Nova Scotia Mass Choir.

Although he's been busy in B.C. as a singer and actor, recently recording and releasing his album Freedom there, the New York-born soul man welcomes any opportunity to return to his

second home, like the choir's annual The Dream Continues musical tribute to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium on Saturday at 7 p.m.

Along with the choir, under the direction of Owen (O'Sound) Lee, Robinson will share the stage with Erin Costelo, Keonte Beals and

the North Preston Dance Troupe, and looks forward to sharing King's message of freedom and equality with artists and audience members who weren't around when he was a living beacon for the civil rights movement.

Taking a break at Uncommon Grounds from a busy Halifax schedule, sandwiched between

rehearsals and Cherokee's basketball game at Gorsebrook Junior High, Robinson recalls experiencing the charismatic King's persona up close, when he met him and other civil rights leaders at a show in New York, while performing with soul-funk legends the

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FROM PAGE D1: ROBINSON

Ohio Players in the mid-1960s.

“You could tell he was determined, but he was relaxed at the time (we met) because he wasn’t preaching or talking about the movement,” says Robinson, who recalls King was accompanied by Harlem politician and civil rights pioneer Adam Clayton Powell.

“He was just enjoying our music. I didn’t see his power until later on. But I was very impressed with him, as a person.

“They were just enjoying the music, they weren’t planning anything, and they were loving my work and what I was doing. Eventually I got to know his kids after he passed away; I met his son when I was in Halifax for the gospel festival, but he was a great person who became an icon, but I didn’t see the icon in him when we met. He was just there talking to people like Dizzy (Gillespie)

who was also there.”

Robinson grew up knowing that a change had to come. Although born in New York in 1945, he heard first-hand about racist Jim Crow laws in the South from grandparents, aunts and uncles still living in Georgia and South Carolina, and his father’s experiences as a touring vaudevillian.

“My father would tell me about being on the road, and producers would run off with all the money,” recalls Robinson.

“Then he’d have to sneak back to New York. They knew they’d be safe when they got to Washington, D.C., but they actually had to travel through the woods with their suits on, trying to get home while afraid of getting lynched.

“I grew up with all those stories, but I was one of those kids who always had the last word, so they wouldn’t send me down south to see my grandparents or cousins and uncles, because they said I’d probably get hung down there. Because I wouldn’t take too

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**Dutch Robinson
On meeting Martin
Luther King Jr.**

”

much shit from anyone. I didn’t get to see my grandfather until I was 25 because he wouldn’t come up north either, and I stopped trying to get my parents to let me go down south.”

Robinson quit the Ohio Players in the late 1960s, after an incident when a fan was beaten by security for trying to talk to the band backstage at a whites-only club in Huntsville, Ala.

It was his last time going south of the Mason-Dixon line until nearly a decade later when he visited his grandmother in Florida, after setting his sights on a life and career north of the 49th parallel.

In Canada, he found a welcoming home, especially in Nova Scotia, where he bonded with members of the mass choir at its very start.

“I love the choir; I’m glad to be back,” says Robinson, who will perform several songs, including an interpretation of The Lord’s Prayer.

“The thing I love about the choir is when I first came to Nova Scotia, the mass choir did not exist. But they took people from the community to form the choir, and I was a big inspiration to the choir because they didn’t think they could do it, and I was there at rehearsal saying, ‘You can! You can!’

“When they got their TV show (Hallelujah on VisionTV), I was on it about three or four times, and I watched them grow. To see how it’s grown, I’m very proud of them because I was there at the beginning. I guess that’s why they’ve held on to me all these years.”

The Dream Continues starts at 7 p.m., with a silent auction fundraiser at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$28 each, or \$25 each for groups of eight or more, available at the Dal Arts Centre box office, by phone at 902-494-3820 or at arts-centre.dal.ca.