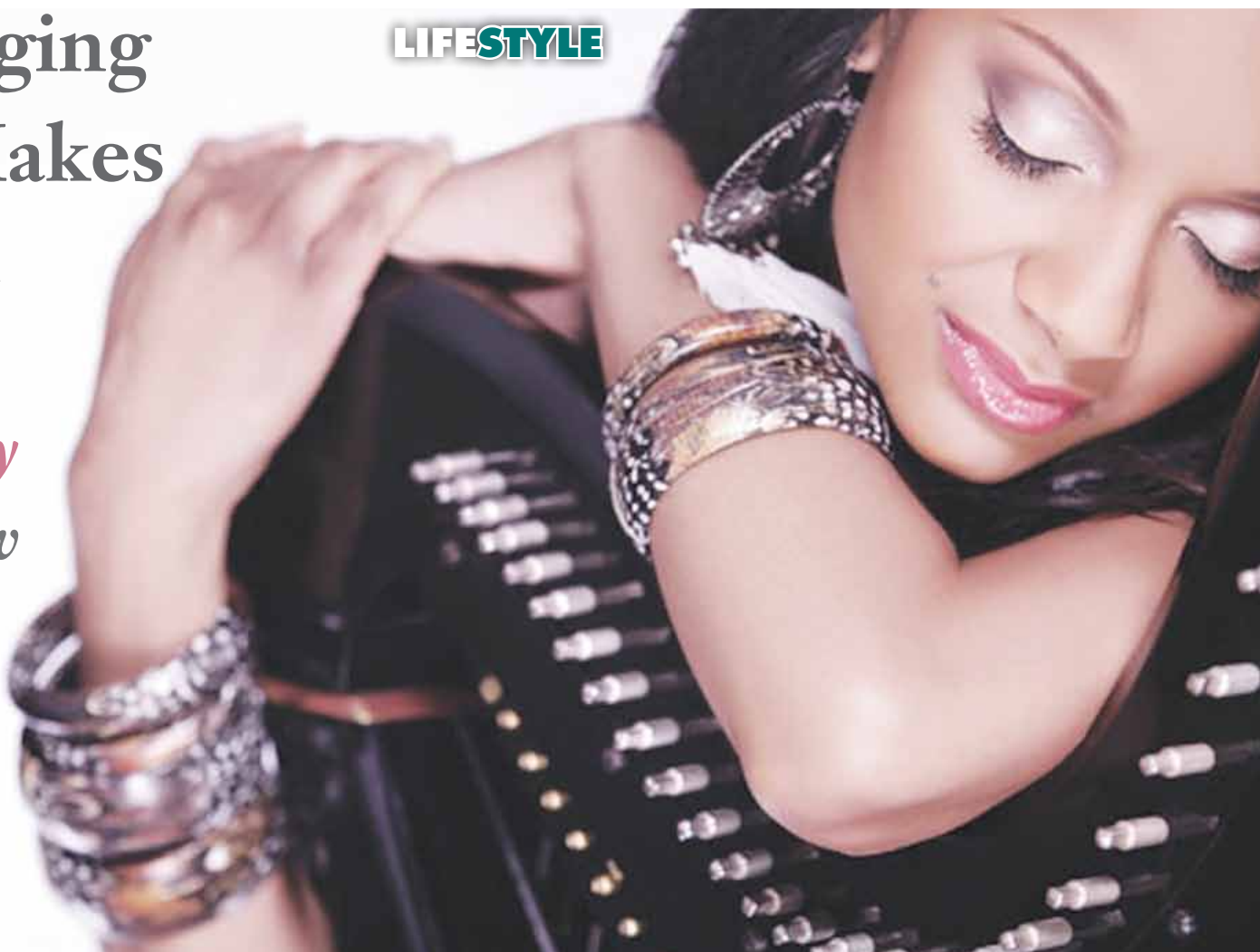


# Head-banging Harpist Makes Her Move *Musician*

*Rashida Jolley  
takes her show  
on the road*



By Huda Mu'min  
WI Staff Writer

Washington native Rashida Jolley comes from a long line of musicians and is making her unique mark in the music world. Jolley, a former Miss District of Columbia and “America’s Got Talent” contestant is on a mission to inspire others to be true to themselves and follow their dreams. Jolley, who recently made her debut as “The Head banging harpist” on Lady Gaga’s international “Monsterball Tour”, sat down with the Informer’s Huda Mu’min, to discuss her love for music, the harp as an instrument, and what the world can expect next from her.

“I tried other instruments before the harp. My mother told me when I was 10 though, that God had told her I was meant to play the harp. I fell in love with it instantly,” Jolley said.

While her mother’s idea of creating music that incorporated the harp and lyrics, little did Jolley know that countless hours of study and practice would prepare her to perform on one of the largest international tours in history.

Jolley creatively set herself apart from other entertainers, with a cool mix of classical,

*“I was teased about being different, but some of the best advice I ever received was, ‘Be true to yourself.’ + Rashida Jolley*

hip-hop, R&B, and pop music delivered while singing and playing the harp. She has been compared to performers like Alicia Keys and Celine Dion, and credits the drive to be different with her success.

“I was teased about being different, but some of the best advice I ever received was, ‘Be true to yourself.’ Sometimes being true to yourself makes you different from other people or to what is normal or mainstream. Just look at the people who have made huge differences in the world. Many of them had to go up against what was mainstream. A lot of the time that is the only way to leave a lasting impact,” said Jolley.

From performing local gigs in the District to “America’s Got

Talent” to touring as the “Head Banging Harpist”, Jolley’s career is a dream for many.

“Being on tour with Lady GaGa was an incredible experience. I had one of those moments in my life where I actually saw my dream become a reality... I couldn’t believe it was actually happening,” Jolley said.

One of my most inspiring moments for Jolley came toward the end of the tour, while in Mexico. In a sold-out stadium of 50,000, pouring rains began – reminiscent to Diana Ross’ celebrated 1983 Central Park performance – only this time the music did not stop.

“There was a downpour of

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June 1-13, 2011



## TICKETED EVENTS:



Bobby McFerrin

**JUNE 3**

**The Brass-A-Holics** • La Maison Française at the Embassy of France • 7:30 PM

**JUNE 11**

**Bobby McFerrin** presents **VOCABULARIES** w/ Howard University's Afro Blue Reunion Choir Warner Theatre • 7:30 PM



Rebirth Brass Band

**JUNE 13**

**A Night in Treme: The Musical Majesty of New Orleans** Rebirth Brass Band, Donald Harrison, Dr. Michael White, Big Sam Williams, James Andrews & Wendell Pierce • The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall • 7:30 PM

Treme is produced by Danny Melnick for Absolutely Live Entertainment in association with Wendell Pierce. The HBO Series, Treme, created and executive produced by David Simon and Eric Overmyer. HBO and Treme are service marks of Home Box Office, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## FREE EVENTS:

**JUNE 4 & 5**

**Jazz 'n Families Fun Days** • The Phillips Collection • 6/4: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

6/5: 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM • Presented by The Washington Post's Going Out Guide

**Capital Focus Jazz Band, Herman Burney Trio and Jazzin' at Sitar Students, Sousa Middle School Dance Ensemble, James King Quartet, Michael Bowie & Sine Qua Non String Quartet, Victor Provost Trio, Vince Evans ... and more**

**JUNE 1-10**

Kennedy Center Millennium Stage **International Jazz Showcase** • All performances at 6:00 PM

6/1 – Berklee World Jazz Octet • 6/2 – DC Choro • 6/3 – Cheick Hamala Diabete • 6/5 – The Brass-A-Holics

6/7 – German Jazz All-Stars • 6/9 – Victor Provost Steel Pan Band • 6/10 – Kenia Ashby & Origem



Roy Hargrove

**JUNE 12**

**Toby Foyeh & Orchestra Africa, Claudia Acuña Quintet, Frédéric Yonnet, Roy Hargrove's RH Factor, and the Eddie Palmieri All-Star Salsa Orchestra** • The National Mall • Sylvan Theater • 1:00 - 7:30 PM



Eddie Palmieri



For the complete schedule of ticketed and free events, visit [dcjazzfest.org](http://dcjazzfest.org)



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## JOLLEY

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rain and yet, people were energized and Gaga gave 150 percent through the entire show. The fearlessness and excitement that came from the audience and everyone on stage, was inspiring," said Jolley.

Her fairytale-like journey to superstardom is only just beginning. Since the end of her tour, Jolley has entered the studio.

"I'm working on my album with my brothers Nate and Noble. My new single "There's No One Else Like You" will be available in June and the album has something for everyone. The album will feature original songs with the harp and a mixture of R&B with a rock edge."

Jolley recently helped close-out the second season of the Mo'Nique show by performing her new single for her audience. She said it was important for her first solo performance to be on

the Mo'Nique Show because she has been a supporter of the actress for years.

"A year ago I sat in the audience to view a taping of Mo'Nique's show and it was amazing. To now perform on that same show was wonderful. I respect and love her talent and her perseverance. She has inspired me over the years and it was an honor for me," Jolley said.

Rashida hopes to continue to grow as an artist and continue to inspire others to follow their dreams.

"Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith and grow your wings on the way down. I feel like that quote is the story of my life. From being a kid that was teased, to standing where I am now, it really has been about taking a leap of faith," Jolley said. **WI**

*For more information about Rashida Jolley and her upcoming releases visit [www.RashidaJolley.com](http://www.RashidaJolley.com).*