

PROFILE of The Week

By Dr. DHANPAUL NARINE

Ingrid Griffith:

The Girl With the Golden Touch!

Ingrid Griffith is one of the bright lights of the Caribbean community. She is talented, innovative, and refreshingly exciting. She captivates her audience with experiences culled from her surroundings and leaves them wanting more. Ingrid combines real life situations with her unique perspective on life. The public can do no more than applaud in appreciation. Ingrid is a social commentator and in the best tradition of dramatists she weaves her stories that tell of the joys and tribulations of her community.

In June 2016 Ingrid thrilled her audience at City Hall in New York as she spun webs of everyday stories from the towns to the global village. Ingrid was born in Georgetown, in Guyana. She grew up in Albert Street in Queenstown but the family also lived in Third St, Hadfield Street, and Foreshaw Street. Ingrid is the second of three children. Her mom is Joyce and her dad is Ronald. Ingrid attended Wedgewood All Age School in Cummings Street and then St. Roses High School. Her favorite subjects were Math and English; Miss Underwood and Miss Fonseca were teachers that were always helpful.

In 1972 Ingrid's parents emigrated to the United States and five years later she left Guyana to join them. She was excited at the prospect of a reunion. As the plane landed at JFK on an April evening Ingrid and her sister saw the bright lights and felt the excitement of being in a new home. Long Island was quiet and she was impressed by the space in Wyandanch.

Ingrid and her sister found themselves in school the following week at West Hollow Junior High in Dix Hills. Ingrid said that the experience was different and sobering. 'I was the only black student in my class. I got lost in the hallways and the other students looked at me rather oddly. I told them I was from Guyana and they could not figure it out. They were friendly from a distance. I had no friends and I felt isolated.' But the school adminis-

tration was warm and friendly and made her feel welcome.

Ingrid went to High School and then to college in Farmingdale. There were challenges that Ingrid had to face and she did so with great courage. She did well in college and then moved to New York City and got a job at the New York Stock Exchange. Ingrid was finding her way with remarkable determination. She was on her own and had to use her initiative 'to figure it out.' This she did

well in them. What has inspired her show 'Demerara Gold?'

According to Ingrid, 'My Master's thesis incorporated a lot of my memoirs and from that the show developed. I wanted more people to hear my story. A staged play would bring a different audience and hopefully inspire change. This story is not only for a Guyanese or Caribbean-

amazing. Ingrid says that people have given it high marks everywhere. She performed 'Demerara Gold' across the city, including Richmond Hill in Queens and there are plans to bring it to Queens again. The story is so powerful and provocative that it makes you laugh, cry and think and it

Ingrid promises to bring this same energy to her shows as well. In April 2016 she was a cast member in a production of 'Twilight' in which she played the role of Elaine Brown the activist, poet, and Chairwoman of the Black Panther Party in the seventies. Ingrid gave a wonderful performance that won rave reviews.

Two other women are on top of Ingrid's list. There is Maya Angelou whose writings and life have motivated Ingrid to tell her story. It was Maya Angelou that said, 'There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story.' Her book 'Why the Caged Bird sings' and her poem 'Still I Rise' are beloved works. Then there is Michelle Obama whose intellect, clarity of vision and poise and expression have captivated all age groups.

Ingrid loves running, reading, traveling and of course acting. She remembers her visit to Kenya with affection where she ran in a marathon with the elite runners. id She places a high premium on education and would like young people to stay in school take their education and reach for the stars.

Ingrid will be performing excerpts from her hit show 'Demerara Gold' on Saturday June 18, 2016 at 4:30 pm at Charles Gray Theater at the Presbyterian Church of St. Albans, 190-04 119 Avenue, Queens NY 11412. Tel: 718-454-4234. Admission is free.

There is no doubt that Ingrid Griffith has come a long way. She has shown class and determination and an ability to triumph over the odds. Ingrid is an important voice. Her stories have universal appeal. They are designed to motivate and to lift her audience and to point the way towards fulfillment. We wish Ingrid and her family all the best in the future.



INGRID GRIFFITH:
A one woman tour de force that brings the pride and passion of the Caribbean to the global village.

tells you how to move on in life. The idea is that the human condition may be the same but we can use the stories of life and better ourselves and this is what Ingrid hopes to achieve in 'Demerara Gold.'

Ingrid has become an inspirational figure in the community. She views the future with a great deal of optimism. She said, 'I hope to bring my voice on Broadway, with a Caribbean flavor! I would like to be one of the writers that share our stories with the mainstream.' This makes sense as there are stories on other communities and it is time that the voices of the Caribbean are heard.

Ingrid admires a number of persons that has had a profound impact on her thinking. She says that Anna Deavere Smith has managed to look for places that captures the intellect and fuses it with raw honesty.



Ingrid captivates her audience after another dazzling performance.

most admirably.

Ingrid knew that education was the key to success. She went back to school. She enrolled at City College in Manhattan and completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. This was a great achievement and is a testimony to Ingrid's character as she had to juggle classes with her job. While in college she took acting classes and did

an audience. It has universal themes.'

Ingrid uses her message to motivate her audience. She says that while society changes one can use the lessons of peace and hard work to make a difference and to shine. The play is contemporary and is the story of the immigrant. The audience can totally relate to it.

The response has been