

Jazz pianist Marcus Johnson to perform at the Dakota, promote his line of wine

Written by



Wine and jazz pair well together.

When people think of music and spirits, many tend to associate rock with vodka, country with beer; blues with whiskey. But, after a hard day's work, there's something soothing about kicking back, putting on some smooth jazz and enjoying a nice glass of wine. So it should come as little surprise that a jazz artist has launched his own brand of wine.

That's exactly what acclaimed jazz pianist Marcus Johnson has done. Johnson launched Flo Wine a year and a half ago and is in town to perform and support the Twin Cities launch of the brand. Johnson is performing at 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 9, at the Dakota Jazz Club, 1010 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis. Admission is \$25.

So how did Johnson go from jazz pianist to winemaker?

"For me it's about expanding your brand through complementary offerings," said Johnson. "When I perform music I promote my wine, when I'm selling my wine, I promote my music."

Johnson, who started playing piano at age 14, has released 15 jazz albums and was nominated for an NAACP Image Award. The Washington, D.C. native who now calls Los Angeles home, is somewhat of an overachiever. If being a touring jazz artist and winemaker weren't enough, consider that the Howard University graduate is also an attorney.

"I want to control as much of my destiny as I can," said Johnson. "I try to have a panoramic focus."

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Johnson's upcoming Dakota performance will feature a mix of old and new with songs from his recently released jazz homage to rock music, "This Is How I Rock" and the upcoming release, "Live and Direct," which is a mix of live performances and studio tracks.

Flo (an acronym meaning For the Love of) Wine is available at select Cub stores. Flo offers various whites and reds and is releasing a Moscato later this summer.

For more information about the May 8 show, call the Dakota Jazz Club at (612) 332-5299 or go to the Dakota's website at www.dakotacooks.com . For more information on Johnson and Flo Wine, visit www.threekeys.com .

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7 p.m.

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