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Metro

THURSDAY 9 October 2003

One of the highlights of Stribling's career was to be invited to sing for then President Bill Clinton at a gala tribute

Stevie's Wonderful discovery

Story and photos by VANITHA NADARAI

HER smoky voice softly filled the room and wrapped itself around each note from the piano.

Each line that Angela Stribling sang showed off her vocal strength and control. What made it more memorable was the passion that flowed as she sang Roberta Flack's Closer I Get To You with Brooks Giles for the media people here recently.

This was the same passion that Stevie Wonder had sensed the moment she went up to him almost 10 years ago to ask for an interview. New York-based Stribling was at that time and still is the host of the 24-hour television jazz network BET jazz, and she had gone to the premiere of Spike Lee's movie Jungle Fever, for which Wonder had written the soundtrack.

She had gone up to Wonder to tell him how wonderful a singer and composer he was and before she could ask him for an interview, he held her arm and said: "I can tell so much about you as a person from your voice."

"I was in awe," Stribling said. That was the start of a long and close friendship and which led to Stribling singing with Wonder in his concerts.

And then there was Chaka Khan, Najee, guitarist Mark Whitfield and bassist Victor Bailey. Stribling has been compared to Phyllis Hyman, Erykah Badu and Sade.

One of the highlights of her career was to be invited to sing for then President Bill Clinton at a gala tribute hosted by a US congressman, which was also attended by Robert De Niro and Kevin Spacey.

"When the organisers asked me, I said yes. It was such an honour. I sang jazz, some swinging numbers and ballads – the president loved it," she said.

Stribling grew up in Buffalo, New York where a family friend discovered her talents at the age of four. She was a natural because she sang from the diaphragm and had a powerful



Giles (left) and Stribling at the media preview.



Drummer George Gray has previously performed with Stevie Wonder and Chuck Berry.

She is here with The Brooks Giles Jazz Quintet for a two-day performance at Kit Kat Club, as the last-leg of Hennessey XO Jazz Smooth and Mellow Asian Tour 2003. They had earlier performed in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei and Kaohsiung.

This is the second consecutive year Giles has come here to perform with his band, and it is

Saxophonist and vocalist Giles has also performed for Clinton, and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the Dutch and Thai royal families. He has performed with Donald Byrd, Charlie Persip, The Peter Duncan Orchestra, Ron Affif, Alice Day and Mildred Jones.

Drummer George Gray, who is also a much sought-after physical fitness trainer, has per-

bandstand with legends like Ted Curson and featured guests like George Benson, Chaka Khan, Tony Bennett, Roy Hargrove, Jeff Moody and Jeff Watts.

These globe-trotting performers are now at our doorstep once again to give a taste of fine jazz that has mesmerised thousands of music lovers worldwide.