

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Birth of a Human Rights Generation:

DC's own **Tabi Bonney** and Grammy nominated **Kyonte**
Mainstream the Movement for DC Statehood

WHAT: Free Concert/Teach-In
WHEN: April 1, 2009; 5:30 – 8:00p
WHERE: West Steps of the Capitol Building, 1st Street, NW between
Constitution and Independence Avenues

(Washington, DC; Mar. 30) This Wednesday, some of D.C.'s most beloved local musical artists will take to the steps of the U.S. Capitol Building with long-time local leaders to give voice to the struggle for DC Statehood and the makings of a Human Rights Generation.

Mirroring the political scene where since the creation of the District in 1801 citizens of the nation's capitol have had no voting representation in the national legislature, D.C.'s entertainment world has been grossly underrepresented in pop culture. One local artist making major moves to change that as headliner for the April 1st "Equal Footing" event is **Tabi Bonney**. Bonney, an independent artist who has directed his own videos and managed to get rotation on every major music video network, says he's seen the energy of young people – the human rights generation – shift towards an interest in politics.

"[The political interest] It started, I would say with the Clintons, you saw little inklings of it, but definitely since the whole Obama movement... you just see the movement of younger people carrying it and feeling that it's something important, that we can all indeed make a difference."

The human rights generation is marked not only by a movement of civic participation (like the record number of young people who voted in the last presidential election), but also by an environmental and social entrepreneurship mentality. "Green" companies like the organic tee-shirt line, Broccoli City and media firm, n'kosi, have helped sponsor the event as have local events companies Suite Nation and PSA Events, both of which are dedicated to social gatherings with a community awareness component.

This free concert/teach-in is "an incredible and amazing opportunity for young people especially to raise their voices and to make clear their interest to the Congress of the United States," says **Johnny Barnes**, the event MC and Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital area, "I expect it to be an evening where people learn, get involved, and hopefully Congress listens."

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Also joining Tabi on the Capitol is Grammy Award-nominated R&B singer **Kyonte**, and Vox Pupli's 2008 Independent Album of the Year winner, **Rasi Caprice** whose anthemic "Free DC" has been heating up voting rights rallies.

ABOUT DC STATEHOOD: This Sunday was the 48th anniversary of the ratification of the 23rd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which grants District residents a vote for the President and Vice President. This anniversary perhaps would have been cause for celebration particularly given the historic election of this year past were it not for District residents otherwise being engaged in the struggle for "equal footing," a legal concept translated to mean political standing (full representation) and sovereignty (control over one's own affairs). Since the District was created in 1801, citizens of our nation's capital have not had voting representation in Congress – although these citizens have fought and died in every war declared in the name of this union founded on the principle of no taxation without representation, and although D.C. residents pay fairly high federal taxes. The U.S. is the only democratized nation in the world whose capital citizens are disenfranchised.

To date, Congress controls the District budget and recently placed 70 limitations on how money is spent in the District including on reproductive freedom, HIV/AIDS counseling and prevention, domestic partnership benefits, and medical marijuana. To date, the District suffers from HIV/AIDS rates, poverty levels, and unemployment rates higher than the national average.

In 2006, the U.N. Human Rights Committee declared the disenfranchisement of District residents to be a violation of human rights. Recently, the Senate passed the Voting Rights Act 2009 that would grant D.C. one vote in the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill has not yet been voted on in the House. Statehood for the District would grant voting representation in both the House and Senate.

About Tabi Bonney:

Born in Lomé Togo, West Africa, before making his home in Washington, D.C., rapper Tabi Bonney – the son of famed musician Itady Bonney – began rhyming in high school and formed the group Organized Rhyme while in college. The group released material independently and opened for several big-name acts including Outkast, The Fugees, LL Cool J, En Vogue and Cam'ron. In 2006, Bonney released his first album, *A Fly Guy's Theme*, featuring an appearance from Grammy Award-nominated Raheem DeVaughn. This year, he released his sophomore effort, *Dope*, and his first single "Rich Kids" is already in rotation on MTV Jams, MTVU, and VH1 Soul. He has also maintained a fashion line called Bonney Runway.

About Rasi Caprice: DC bred rapper Rasi Caprice has been recognized by the Washington Post, the Independent Music Awards, and by The Musician's Atlas Guide for his album *Taxation Without Representation* which won the Vox Populi vote for 2008 Independent Album of the Year.

About Kyonte: Singer/songwriter/producer Kyonte was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2007 for his production work alongside Chucky Thompson for Raheem DeVaughn's hit single "Woman." He has also written and produced for Foxy Brown and gospel artist Brent Jones. He released his R&B album *Body Shop* in 2008.

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