LADY LABELLE

Gladys Knight might be the Empress of Soul, but **Patti LaBelle** is its godmother. In her more than 50-year singing career, she's proved to be more than just a good voice. In addition to earning Grammys, LaBelle has acted on stage and screen, found her rhythm on *Dancing with the Stars*, and even hosted her own Cooking Channel show, *Patti LaBelle's Place*. On February 3, she will put her original talent on display as part of the Kravis Center's annual gala. The performance is open to the public and tickets start at $35. *PBI* chatted with LaBelle about her two main passions: singing and cooking. *(561-832-7469, kravis.org) –Mary Murray*



DEREK BLANKS

***PBI*: What's your earliest memory of singing?**
LaBelle: It would have been with the Beulah Baptist Church choir when I was, I don't even know how old—old enough not to be shy anymore. Before I went to the choir, I would sing around the house with a broom, pretending it was a microphone, and I always sounded decent to myself. When I joined the choir, the choir director made me sing lead instead of singing in the chorus with the background. She said, "You have a lead voice, darlin'. You must go out there and show your voice."

What are your favorite songs to perform?
I love a lot of them, but I guess the ones that I must sing every night would be "Lady Marmalade" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." But if I sing those songs seven times a week, every time it's going to be different. You can never say, "She's going to sing it this way or that way." I'm never going to do what you expect.

What do you love about cooking?
It's very cathartic. I love cooking everything: baking, Italian food, soul food. I'm very creative in the kitchen. Every day, I cook. I made breakfast this morning; I'm going to make dinner later. I am just a cooking lady. I cook as well as I sing.

How do your cooking habits change while on tour?
On tour, I take my own pots and pans and I cook in my room. We usually have a suite with a kitchen, and the kitchen does not have the right pots for Patti. So I take my Patti pots on the road with me and I cook for the band and crew in my suite. I can avoid room service like that also.

You've Got A Friend: The Music of Carole King and James Taylor, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Jupiter, $45-$55. (561-575-2223, jupitertheatre.org)

27 Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Kravis Center, West Palm Beach, $20. (561-832-7469, kravis.org)

28 The Beach Boys, Sunrise Theatre, Fort Pierce, $65-$75. (772-461-4775, sunrisetheatre.com)

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Organized by the Norton Museum of Art, with the support of the Portland Museum of Art, Maine. This exhibition is made possible through the generosity of the Henry Luce Foundation, Anne Berkley Smith, and Wells Fargo Private Bank, as well as an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. With additional support provided by the Mr. and Mrs. Hamish Maxwell Exhibition Endowment and the Priscilla and John Richman Endowment for American Art. Exhibition Lectures are made possible in part by The Gayle and Paul Gross Education Endowment Fund and The Janirve Foundation Education Endowment in Memory of Irving and Jeannett Reuter.

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