[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: So nice to see all the folks we love together just sitting here talking about everything that's been going on. It's been a long, long time since we got to be together. Nobody knows when the next time will be. It could be years and years from now. Family reunion. Let's have a family reunion. Oh, yes. Family reunion, it's so nice to come together. Be together. I wish my grandma could see her big beautiful family.

Daneen Wilburn: I shall miss her face and her warm and tender embrace, and if my grandpa was here, he'd be smiling from ear to ear. Yes, he would. He said, look what God has done. All my children, my daughters and sons. Yeah, family reunion. Oh, yes, have a family reunion. Yeah, family reunion. Yeah, yeah. It's so nice to come together, be together.

[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: Come on, Ricky.

[Music].

Daneen Wilburn: Yeah. Thank you, Ricky. I wish my grandma was here to see her beautiful family. Lord, I miss her face and her fried chicken. It was so good. [Laughter] And her warm and tender embrace, yeah. But if my grandpa was here, I know he'd be smiling from ear to ear, yeah. Hey, he'd say, look what God has done. All my children. Already. [Laughter] Family reunion. Yeah, let's have a family. Let's have a family reunion. Hey, it's so nice to come together. Hey, family reunion. Yeah, yeah, yeah. A family reunion. Oh, let's have, yeah, family reunion. It's so nice, yeah, to come together. Hey, family reunion. Yeah, yeah, yeah. A family reunion. Yeah, it's so nice to come together, be together. [Applause].

Daneen Wilburn: Thank you so much. Good evening, everyone. Oh, man. I went online earlier this evening. I was on my way down to see if I could grab a couple of spots for some family members, and it said sold out. Hey, thank you. [Laughter]

[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: Oh, yeah. Blood will flow when flesh and steel are one lying in the color of the evening sun. Tomorrow's rain will wash the stain away. Something in our minds will always stay. Perhaps this final act was meant to chase a lifetime's argument nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could. And those who born beneath an angry star lest we forget how fragile we are. On and on the rain will fall.

Daneen Wilburn: Like tears from the stars. Like tears from the stars. On and on the rain will say how fragile we are, how fragile we are. Little too much now. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Maybe just some overall volume. Is that all right, guys, if we work things out? [Laughter] The blood will flow when flesh and steel are one lying in the color of the evening sun. Tomorrow's rain will wash the stain away, but something in our mind will always stay. Perhaps this final act was meant to chase a lifetime's argument. Nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could. For others born beneath an angry star, lest we forget how fragile we are. Oh, on and on the rain will fall like tears from the sky. Like tears from the sky.

Daneen Wilburn: And the rain will say how fragile we are. How fragile we are.

[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: [Applause] Blood will flow when flesh and steel are one lying in the color the sun. Tomorrow's rain will wash the stain away. Something in our eyes will always stay. Perhaps this final

act was meant to chase a lifetime's argument. Nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could. For others born beneath an angry star lest we forget how fragile we are.

Daneen Wilburn: Hey, on and on the rain will fall like tears from the sky. Like tears from the sky. On and on the rain will say, how fragile we are. How fragile we are. How fragile we are. How fragile we are. How fragile we are. How fragile we are. How fragile we are.

[Music]

Speaker 1: [Applause] Beautiful. Beautiful.

Daneen Wilburn: Let me have my sisters come back up.

[MUSIC]

Daneen Wilburn: Oh, yeah. One more time, fellas. Come on.

[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: When the night has come, yeah, and the land is dark and the moon is the only light we see. Oh, I won't be afraid. I won't be afraid just as long as you stand by me. You look so pretty, Toni. [LAUGHTER] Darling, darling, stand by me. Yeah, yeah, stand by me. Oh, stand by me. Stand by me. If the sky that we look upon the air should crumble and fall, or if the mountains tumble into the sea, I won't cry. I won't cry. No, I won't shed a tear just as long as you stand, stand by me. And darling, darling, stand by me. Yeah, stand by me. Will you stand? Come on. Stand by me. Stand by me. Whenever you're in trouble stand by me. Stand by me. Stand by me. Stand by me.

[Music]

Daneen Wilburn: Come on, Ricky play the guitar.

Daneen Wilburn: [Music] Ricky G on guitar. [Applause]. You guys are good. Ricky G on guitar. Beautiful job, Ricky. My beautiful friend Tonga Ross-Mau on keys tonight and on musical direction. Little less keys, please [Music] . I'm glad I wore this dress just for this song. [Music] [Applause] . Thank you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the stage, Grammy Award winning producer, Mr. Kamau Kenyatta [Applause] .

Kamau Kenyatta: That was beautiful, and thank you for that song. I bet nobody expected to hear that one tonight [Laughter] . Well, Daneen, this is a really fun chance for me to talk to you about your history.

Daneen Wilburn: About all the stuff you already know? [Laughter]

Kamau Kenyatta: I don't know everything. Reveal some of your craft to the people who are listening. Would you take us back to when you first started singing with the family and just paint that picture for us?

Daneen Wilburn: Well, I just remember that from the time that I was just alive, my earliest memories was my mom playing Joe Jackson in the living room making us sing. They were both singers so we were already into music and inspired by music. I just remember that we would all be in the living room, my mom would be teaching us harmony parts. At the earliest age, we could do any harmony parts that she would require. We started singing at church, and there would be opportunities where they would ask us to come sing. We didn't really understand that we were actually any good. We just were singing. I mean, I don't want to go on. Did you want to jump in there?

Kamau Kenyatta: No, you were going to say something where you were telling me upstairs about a

specific time that you sang.

Daneen Wilburn: Yea. It was the first memory I have of us actually being onstage in front of the public and in front of people. We were at this big church, and they called us up to sing. I remember my dad and my mom sitting together. They were about the sixth row from the front. They called us up, we went up there, and we sang the first song, and everybody was clapping and they were hooting and howling and stuff. We were just like, what's going on here? Then we sang another song. It was an Edwin Hawkins song with the Hawkins family. For those of you who know Hawkins, they were musical dynasty in gospel music. Edwin Hawkins wrote Oh, Happy Day, and so this was one of his songs that was called, Fear Not Little Flock. I sang the lead on that.

Kamau Kenyatta: Which sounds like?

Daneen Wilburn: Don't you be lonely, don't be afraid. Remember the promise of God, He'll never let you stray. He will always be there to comfort and dispay, put all your trust in Him, and remember to say he a prayer. Then my brothers and sisters said, "Remember to say your prayers." All I remember was, as soon as I started singing, everybody at church just stood up and started screaming. I said, "We're good at this."

Kamau Kenyatta: How old would you have been?

Daneen Wilburn: I would have been probably five or six. I remember going back, after we got done, everybody was clapping. So we went back to our seats because we were done, but everybody kept clapping. Then my dad said, "They want you to sing another song." We went back up, and I was like, man, what is going on? But I remember my dad sitting there, and I remember he had his hand over his face, covering it, because he had a tear coming down his face. I didn't understand it back then when I was a kid, but looking back now, he was proud of us. But that was really my first time where I realized, we're good at this singing thing. People like it [Laughter].

Kamau Kenyatta: Fast forward a bit. I know you're a prodigy, obviously. What do you practice? How do you think about music? What did you do to learn technique? Because this isn't all talent, obviously, right?

Daneen Wilburn: No, growing up, there were people that I listened to; Tremaine Hawkins, another Hawkins family member. She was the first gospel singer that I ever heard that actually used tone. Gospel singers, we can go. But she had tone, and she was smooth, and she held notes. I remember thinking, that sounds so different than anything. So I studied her and studied other artists along those lines. Then I learned from the people around me. I got opportunities to go in the studio with a friend of mine Michael McCurtis, an incredibly musician. I had never been in the studio before, and I couldn't believe how I sounded after I got done the recording. I said, "Who is that?" He said, "That's you." I said, "What? That's me?" [Laughter] I couldn't believe it. But it taught me that you can get better. When you practice and when you just dig for information and explore, sky's the limit, as they say.

Kamau Kenyatta: You were performing at the Hollywood Bowl, you were doing big things, and then your life took, I think, a beautiful detour, because I know your children, and I love all of them. I love young people. I'm a teacher, but these are very, very special people, every one of them. Can you tell us, when you stopped singing in public so much, was it still part of your life?

Daneen Wilburn: Yeah, it was a torturous time because it was beautiful seeing my kids and spending that time with them. But I wanted to sing so bad, and every time I would hear a beautiful album that would come out, it just gets you right in the gut because it never leaves you. I always had just hoped that there would be a day where I'd be able to come back to music. It didn't seem possible at the time, but it happened.

Kamau Kenyatta: Then we work together on an album that is for sale [Laughter] out in the lobby. I'm very proud.

Daneen Wilburn: Thank you.

Kamau Kenyatta: People mention an award that I won, but I'm always just trying to do the best for the artists that I work with. When someone's as inspiring as Daneen is to me, man, I just want to do the best work that I can. We probably worked over a year before we went in the studio. We do a lot of planning. Can you tell me, what did I bring to this table? Because I'm known for producing vocal albums, and I could not sing anything. [Laughter] I just love singing, and I wish I wasn't. I would give up all my instruments and everything that I do if I could sing, but I can't. I have people like her and many others. There's some other very talented singers in this audience, and I won't name them, but there's some very impressive musicians here.

But I admire you all so much. What did I do?

Daneen Wilburn: [Laughter] That's such a, what did I do? Well, Kamau, I don't think he knows his own strength. He has this way of getting through to you, and especially when you're somebody that people are always saying, oh, you're such a great this, and you're such a great that. You need someone that can get through to you and make sure you understand. But there's still some things that you need to work on, you can be even better. I would go to Kamau's office to his music studio, and he would go, oh, Daneen, there's somebody I want you to listen to. He would play some beautiful woman from Colombia that I'd never heard, didn't know she existed. When I heard her voice, I was like, oh, my God. They were so patient.

They would do their parts, and then they would wait for the instrumentation. I learned, I said, man, the musicians are backing her up. She just waits and they just know where to go. I was like, oh, man, I got a lot of work to do. [Laughter] You made me want to quit for a little bit there. [Laughter] I'm like, oh, there's so much more to do. But that's what you do. You expose us, the people that you mentor, to another world. You taught me to trust my musicians, and you don't have to fill every hole. You do your part, and they better do theirs. You have to learn how to trust them. I'll share this one quick story. We were in the studio. We were doing Kamau's version of Quiet Nights.

I don't know, sometimes in the bars and in gigs, people have lots of different lyrics. There's not the original lyrics from Brazil. Well, Kamau wanted to be authentic. He said, we're doing the original lyrics, but I just for some reason couldn't get the nightclub lyrics out of my head. I just kept in the studio but I kept messing it up, and he would stop and he would say the correct words and I'd be, okay. Then we'd go back again and I'd say the wrong words again. [Laughter] Finally, that night when I got home, he sent me an email, and it just had all the weird words. That was it. [Laughter] No, I hope this email finds you well, none of that. [Laughter] It was just the lyrics of the song, sincerely Kamau Kenyatta. I was like, got it. [Laughter]

Kamau Kenyatta: I have no memory of that.

Daneen Wilburn: Listen. But I tell you what? I didn't mess those words up anymore, I got them right the next time. I sure did.

Kamau Kenyatta: Wow. Well, I can just say how much, I've said it about five times tonight, how much you inspire me musically and then you being part of this dynasty with your parents singing, your children singing, your brothers and sisters singing and playing, and we're going to hear more from them. I should have probably saved that to segue into that. But I want to share right now a clip of her niece and nephews doing the Star-Spangled Banner. It's just a minute.

Daneen Wilburn: They're honoring.

Speaker 2: I'm upset.

Speaker 3: I'm upset. [Music] [Applause]

Kamau Kenyatta: See, I was not making this stuff up. Those are the same kids that improvised a dialogue at the beginning of a song on the spot. How old were they then?

Daneen Wilburn: I think Micah, the oldest, was maybe 12, 13, I think. I don't remember.

Kamau Kenyatta: The youngest was nine?

Daneen Wilburn: She was probably. I don't remember, Kamau. They're close together. My brother will tell you. He knows better than I do.

Kamau Kenyatta: The father. You should be proud father.

Daneen Wilburn: My brother.

Kamau Kenyatta: Come on, stand up, Micah.

Daneen Wilburn: My brother, Micah. [Applause] [Laughter]

Kamau Kenyatta: You will be hearing from him next. I could talk to Daneen all night, and I'm loving discovering more about her process. Because musicians, we're busy doing something. We don't always have time for these conversations. But I'm going to stop so you can have more music. Is this the time when we bring up? I'll let you do it.

Daneen Wilburn: Yes. I'm going to bring up my brother, Joel. He's a fabulous guitar player, Joel Whitley. Where are you, Joel? Joel, he's my baby brother. He's a baby boy. We all played instruments or sang or something, but he didn't play anything, and he didn't really sing so he told my mom and dad, he said, I'm the only one in the family that can't play anything. Then my mom said, well, what do you want to play? He said, I want to play the guitar. They went and got him a guitar. [Laughter] Now he's one of the baddest guitar players in the state. [Applause] While he's getting ready, I'll just share why we're doing this song. My mom, she was a wonderful singer, beautiful voice. She had some dreams too of her own.

She got asked when she was 17 years old to go on the road with a big band and travel. Back in those days your parents were like, no, [Laughter] you can't go. Her mom and dad said, no, she couldn't go. But we would still hear her in the house singing these beautiful standards. This is one of the ones that she sang all the time. [Music] [Applause] Joel Whitley. [Laughter] Thank you. Thank you so much. My baby brother. [Laughter] He's still like a baby to us too. It's so crazy anyway. [Laughter] Then the other song my mom taught us, this is the first gospel quartet song. My mom and my dad were gospel quartet singers. This is the first song that they taught us. Come on to the stage, Micah. [Applause] Micah Whitley, my brother. [Music]

Daneen Wilburn: [Music] [Applause] I'm sorry. I'm a church girl [Laughter]. That's what happens when you bring me anywhere. I'm grateful. Yes, thank you. You guys can go. [Laughter] [Applause] It's the same with church boys, too. My brothers, they get in there and they act a fool wherever they go. I'm so grateful that I get to work with incredible musicians. But some of the most incredible musicians I know are my brothers. On keys, Micah Whitley. [Applause] Let's go ahead, Micah. Keep going. [Music] Micah Whitley. Thank you so much. Thank you. I'd like to welcome the band back to the stage. We just got a few more songs for you, a couple more, I think. Thank you for hanging in there, man. You're a good little crowd. I have to take you on the road with me. [Laughter] Got my own amen corner. That's what they call it in the church world.

All the way over here on guitar tonight. He calls me mama, he comes to my house, eats all my food. [Laughter] He's just the sweetest young man, and he's such a talented musician. I'm so grateful to have him in my life and have him onstage with me. Ricky Giordano, ladies and gentlemen. [Applause] On drums, this is our second time being onstage together. I'm so glad to have her. She is a student and mentee of Kamau Kenyatta as well, as we all are, everybody pretty much on the stage is, and so we're so glad to have you with us tonight, Ms. Samantha Lincoln. [Applause] I got my good friend on bass, see him looking around. What are you getting ready to say? We've been playing together for a long time, and I'm so glad. He played the bass on my album. He did a fantastic job. He just can never remember what he did when we play live so [Laughter] I always tell him to go check with the guy that played on the album and see if he could give you some lessons. But he is just an incredible musician, just beautiful tone and beautiful spirit. My friend, Mr. Nathan Brown [Applause].

On keys, and on musical direction tonight, is another dear friend, being able to play with him. He's such a kind and talented person. That's what I love about being with the people that I'm onstage with. They're great people, not just great musicians, and that matters to me. The only problem I have is that I always forget to tell him what instrument he's playing on the gig, because he plays them all. [Laughter] Tonight, he's on keys, Tonga Ross-Mau. [Applause] You've probably guessed who these two ladies are. [Laughter] This is my sister Toni Holmes. [Applause] My sister Joanna Broussard sorry to say Whitley [Applause], and my beautiful baby daughter, Jordan Wilburn. [Applause] Let's do it. [Music] Show your love for Ricky G. [Music]

Daneen Wilburn: [Music] [Applause] Thank you so much. Thank you so much for having me. It's been such an amazing time tonight. I want to just thank each and everyone. Give yourselves a hand for showing up. [Applause] For showing out. This story is really a fun story. When we were kids, our uncle, his name was Cleveland Burrous, he wrote a song, made an album. Back in those days, man, he made an album, it was such a big deal for us. They lived in North Carolina, and by that point we lived here. The 45 record came, a song called I'll Be Free. Man, that blew our minds, that our uncles were on a record. [Laughter] We sang that song for years and years and even at Thanksgiving after we got grown we would sing that song, and just as a family memory.

When I started recording the album, I said to Kamau, there's a song that I'd like to redo and put on my album. We put it on there, and here it is. [Laughter] This is a song called I'll Be Free. It was written by my uncle, Cleveland Burrous. [Music] This song is dedicated to my grandfather, Mr. Thomas Burrous. It's also dedicated to my uncles, Cleveland Burrous who wrote it, to my uncle Clarence and uncle John. All three of them recorded it in 1978. [Music] [Applause] Thank you. Thank you so much. God bless you. Thank you for having us. [Applause] Thank you so much. This is the last last song. [Laughter] I'm going to sing this song, and I'm going to get on at your ways. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome Mr. Kamau Kenyatta. [Applause] [Music].

Can you take some of the piano off for me, please? [Music] Thank you. [Applause] Good night, everybody. Thank you so much. Thank you.