

# WHO'S THAT LADY?

## The Story and Musical Experience of Koko Jones

We all grow up wanting to belong to something, to identify with a specific group or groups. Whether belonging to a popular group socially or reaching fame through sports, music or a gang. As children, adolescents and young adults we want to be looked at in a good or positive light amongst our peers. For me the most important thing in life at that time was hiding my truth from my peers and my family. Knowing that I was different and had different desires and feelings far apart from my neighborhood friends and school mates made this truth very self evident.

Growing up in 1960's and 1970's in a small town caused me to try to put my best social foot forward. This is how music became so central and important to my life. Playing the drums, congas and other instruments was a "sure fire" way to "throw" people. To make them think I was something other than what I was. You add on top of that mix that I was not just good, I was extraordinary in the development of musical skills at a very young age and I advanced those skills to a very high level by the time I was in college.

When I was young, the word "Transsexual" was not even in my vocabulary. Until the advent of Doctor and amateur tennis star Renee Richards, I had never even seen a transsexual. Obviously I've come a long way since the 60's and early 70's and have formed deep ties to the transgendered community and healthcare professionals that work in that community. I have experienced many of the indignities that other trans folk have experienced especially recently with carrying on with my career as a musician.

Being a trans-woman of color, it will be my mission to talk about these issues surrounding this condition that are often seen but never talked about except on hideous, sensationalistic talk shows like Jerry Springer, Maury Povich and others. We are fortunate in this day and age of technology that more reliable and truthful information is available regarding Trans issues. It is also my mission to discuss and to relate my many years of music knowledge and experience and to my experience as a male to female transsexual.

It should be noted that music is my life. My new life as a female has certainly affected it but has not decreased my talent and expertise. It will be my great privilege to share that with the students and staff at Gettysburg College.