

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

# SPEAK UP!

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*"Serving in the Four-State area since 2001"*

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## CULTURE

### **"Adwela & The Uprising – A Reggae Sensation" By Brother Andy Smith**

*After a few minutes talking with Adwela Dawes, the interview changes into a conversation, and much like Reggae itself, Dawes is relaxed and mentally refreshings.*

You may be surprised to find out that the lead vocalist and creator of Adwela and the Uprising was a football star, semi-pro football coach and team owner, however after you hear and see the group share their talents, its believable that someone has a remarkable ability to pull together a team of people to do their incredible reggae presentations. Most of the facts about this pnomenal reggae group can be found on their website: [www.AdwelaAndTheUprising.com](http://www.AdwelaAndTheUprising.com) which is fine. But to have the best experience with Adwela and the Uprising, you should see and here them live at one of their engagements. This story wouldn't be happening if I would not have heard and saw them during their open for the legendary Wailers at the Irie Wine Beer, Reggae and Jazz Festival at Shiley Acres in Inwood, West Virginia this fall. Asking myself how does this group rank to open for the famous Wailers? Winning the Virginia Reggae awards, "Favorite New Artist" award is one way to get you in a lineup with the Wailers. Adwela understands the importance of a good line up and his group has some impressive talent. Adwela, lead vocals and guitar; Frank Freeman, lead guitar; Chris Freeman, bass guitar; Rockei Henry, vocals; Keith Lipkins II, drums and Samanah Brown, keyboards. Plus a musical family of friends to fill in when needed.

Sitting with Adwela you will find out that he has a natural ability to put you at ease and make you feel welcomed, which is a good thing that helps you set aside expectations and receive the reggae experience he wants to connect you to. When they first started out, Adwala was asked by a reporter what the group's name was and he had none. Nevertheless, his love for reggae helped him pull a name that is a tribute to the album of one of his favorite artists, Bob Marley. So what does a professional football coach do in response to a calling to perform reggae? Adwela sought guidance from a higher power that left him with a peace about going on this journey as a Reggae artist, who is fortunate enough to pull together a team of other talented artists who venture with him to go forth and share their gifts. Adwela, whose father is Jamaican and his mother was part of an African Dance company, surely has the elements in his life that opened up the gifts he uses to provide reggae music to others. The journey as a reggae artist came mainly out of taking part in the talent contest. Winning the award came later. And in less than two years Adwela and the Uprising are opening for legendary performers.

Our meeting at the Blue Fox Billiards Bar and Grill in Winchester, Virginia was complimented by hearing their reggae appearance in an intimate gathering, with good audio and visual effects that is a signature of the Blue Fox Billiards Bar and Grill. The musical artists that joined Adwela Dawes for the "Reggae Nite at the Blue Fox" were not his regular lineup. The talent standing in that night was another part of his musical family that included members from the group 2Raw (Ryan Childs providing backup vocals that night, Reggie Barnes aka Reggie Fingers on keyboards, Joe Brown aka Joe Beats on drums and Roschell Diggs aka the Old Man on Bass Guitar). What Speak Up Community News experienced with Adwela and the Uprising at the Blue Fox was just amazing, so much so that I am looking forward to their next appearance. Adwela told me most of the music they play is their own like what they played at Shiley Acres. Speak Up Community News is hoping to document a few of their songs in their upcoming appearance. You can see and hear some of Adwela & the Uprising on the Speak Up Community News magazine page: [www.facebook.com/speakupnews](http://www.facebook.com/speakupnews). However nothing comes near to seeing and hearing them live. Our experience with their music at Shiley Acres and the Blue Fox is making seeing their next appearance an anticipated treat. Wherever this journey takes them, Adwela said they always want to give back to their hometown and their next big scheduled engagement is right at home in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

**Adwela and the Uprising will be appearing Saturday, November 14, 2015 at "The Local"** which is a public house and sports bar on 4532 Plank Road in Fredericksburg, Virginia 22407 phone 540-388-2386. Hope to see you there!