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Duo will celebrate Whitney Houston's life and music at Cafe Wha?

January 28, 2016

6:16 PM MST



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When **Alice Tan Ridley** and **Ayanna Irish** hit the stage at [Cafe Wha?](#) on February 10 for their concert, “I Will Always Love You — A [Whitney Houston](#) Tribute Show,” they will share their love of the late singer’s music, how she inspires them as performers, and how her music brought them together.

Ridley was performing in the Times Square subway station on September 24, 2008, when Irish was walking by. She **joined Ridley** in singing Houston’s 1992 hit “I Will Always Love You” to a large, awestruck crowd. “I am definitely the one who’s always asking people to come sing with me,” said 63-year-old Ridley, who was also a finalist on the reality TV show “America’s Got Talent” in 2010.

Their show at the legendary Greenwich Village venue will be their first public performance together since that spontaneous subway gig. “[music promoter] Music Crowns put the **video** online and it just

went viral," Irish, who lives in the Bronx, said. "People were requesting to see us, so Alice and I came together to do this show, and dedicate it to Whitney because we love her so much." The video has garnered more than 3,600 Facebook "Likes" and has been shared on the social media site more than 4,100 times since it was posted there on November 16, 2015,

The women plan to include approximately 13-14 songs from Houston's extensive catalogue of hits in their tribute, including: "Saving All My Love For You," "I Wanna Dance With Somebody," and, of course, "I Will Always Love You." Houston passed away on February 11, 2011, at the age of 48.

The club is a familiar stage for Manhattanite Ridley. "I've been performing at Cafe Wha? quite a bit when I'm in the city and not out [on the road] with my band," the mother of actress Gabourey Sidibe told the Examiner.com. "It's like a home spot for me." Irish hasn't been booked there before, but has occasionally jumped onstage for impromptu duets with friends who do shows there.

When not planning and rehearsing for this tribute, both women are busy with their solo music careers. "Right now, I'm working on my record. Sometimes I'll tour," Irish said, also mentioning that she toured with Patti LaBelle recently. "'How Will I Know' is definitely a cover of Whitney that I want to put on my album." The 20-something singer is planning to release her debut album some time this year, and "put out a single or two with a video. Definitely we'll be releasing something this year."

Last year, Ridley held a Kickstarter campaign to launch "**Never Lost My Way,**" her first studio album. "I'm proud of it — half classics and half new," she said.

Tickets for "I Will Always Love You — A Whitney Houston Tribute Show" on February 10 are \$20 each and can be purchased [here](#).

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