

On October 1, 2021, I was pleased to attend the outdoor concert of singer Lance Denzel Gulley. I've been attending mostly outdoor/social distance venues, and this one was quite nice – on the lawn at Avalon Village, in Highland Park.

There were opening acts - violinist Candice Giles, and my friend, poet Aurora Harris. Both performed short sets that showcased their talent and passion. The concert started about 30 minutes late, and it was getting dark; we awaited the main act.

Soon Lance took the stage, and from the first moment, their command of space on stage was clear. They are a young person, but with a musical maturity beyond their years, a songster evoking Jon Lucien, Andy Bey, Donny Hathaway. They can play their vocal instrument with gospel or jazz inflections – or both.

Their singing is full, with clarity; and without the gimmickry of ceaseless runs so common to contemporary singing – even though they could do them if they chose. They have serious vocal control, hitting high notes with ease and making their way through tricky jazz chords and changes.

They sang soul standards, and more recent tunes, and as I was leaving a bit early, I could hear him a block away, a commanding God Bless The Child – what young person sings that?!

Lance is an impressive and educated talent, who will learn to lean ever more into their formidable voice.