

Written by Grace Boateng
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Nestled in the heart of the Historic District of Midtown Houston, you will find the home base of Music World Entertainment. This year Music World Entertainment, a company that has grown into becoming one of the world's leading music and entertainment meccas, celebrates its 20th Anniversary. They are also celebrating the 10th anniversary of Music World Gospel. I had the opportunity to sit down with its Founder, President, and CEO, Mathew Knowles.

Mathew was eager to talk about his passion for music and his vision for the future of Music World Entertainment. However, to better understand his vision, Mathew Knowles personally took me on a grand tour of Music World Entertainment's Corporate Campus. The campus consists of the main office building, the plush House of Dereon Media Center, and the Music World's dance and recording studios. Upon entering the main office building, I was greeted by a team of upbeat and enthusiastic individuals. They were eager to share with me the roles they play on the Music World Entertainment team and the projects they are working on. Everyone was in great spirits and I got a real sense of family and community as I toured the campus.

"I have an office at Sony in New York...it becomes tough having an entertainment business in Houston because that is not where it is. The entertainment capital is New York, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. It makes it quite difficult because you don't get some of the opportunities..."

Knowles explained. Somehow Knowles has managed to sustain a successful entertainment business for more than 20 years right here in Houston. Why is that? I concluded it is because Mathew Knowles sees something that we don't readily see. He believes Houston can become a leading entertainment capital being the 4th largest city in the United States. This is why he maintains his offices here in Houston and continues to encourage the city to embrace its entertainment potential.

The undeniable success Knowles has achieved in the Pop genre shows me he knows a thing or two about the entertainment business. Knowles is well respected in the Entertainment industry as the developer and manager of so many talented artists including Destiny's Child. He has an eye for talent, but explained that an artist's drive and passion are more important to him. *"I've had artists' come here and were ready to play and wanted to go to the House of Dereon Media Center and perform and do a showcase and I end up talking to them for two hours. I end up never wanting to see them perform because it's about passion, [and] work ethics. If you don't have passion or work ethics it does not matter your talent."*

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Currently, Music World Gospel is a premiere Gospel label with incredible talent that remains at the top of the charts. *"The business of music is the same regardless of if its pop, polka, dance, r&b, country, [or] gospel it's the same -- the business. I think that is one of the things we recognize, and we approach our gospel label from a business perspective. Our artists approach it from a ministry perspective and we support and we honor their ministry,"*

Knowles explained. Perhaps his approach to the business side of his music explains the success of Music World Gospel as a whole. Le'Andria Johnson, Brian Courtney Wilson, and Vanessa Bell Armstrong, all artists presently under Mathew Knowles' tutelage at Music World Gospel, will be joining Houston Forward Times this May to celebrate spiritual leaders in our community at the 1st annual Visionary Pastors Awards.

Throughout the interview, Mathew expressed how important staying involved in the community has always been for him. *"I look back to where I came from and I can now sit here gratefully and say we have a city block that we own, we've been in business for 20 years and hopefully have made an impact in some sort of way."*

Mathew also likes to give back through his teaching. This year will mark his 5th semester at Texas Southern University. *"Teaching is one of my passions, I love, it's one of the ways I can give back to young people. And I love to have young minds around me so I love teaching at Texas Southern. I teach the business of music."*

The Knowles family has donated to a number of non-profit organizations. They have established the "Survivor Foundation," the "Knowles- Rowland Center," and the "Knowles-Temenos Place Apartments."

"I never feel complacent. I call it complacency when everything is right. I always can be better, I think my team can always be better, I think our artists can always be better. Again that's that passion, that drive, that determination to be the very best. When you get complacent and think, you've arrived, that's when things go left on you, and go left quickly. So I'm always striving to be better, to be a better executive, always striving. What can I learn as this whole new digital world is unfolding in front of us? How can I make sure that at 60 years old I don't get left behind?" I've seen firsthand the work that goes on behind the scenes, and after 20 years of success, I can assure you, Music World Entertainment will not be left behind.