

<http://theartofnoise.co/remembering-left-eye/>



REMEMBERING LEFT EYE

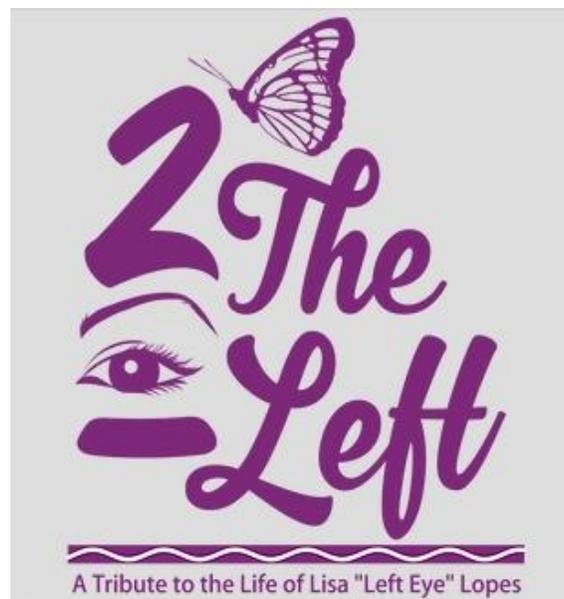
By TAoN

Lisa "Left-Eye" Lopes was bright star in our little world for a short time. One third member of the popular Atlanta based trio TLC consisting of Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins and Rozanda "Chili" Thomas, Philadelphia born Lisa Lopes left a powerful and unforgettable mark on entertainment culture. Although she no longer exists in physical form, she will always remain in our hearts, our minds and spirits. She was a controversial spark, a

tour de force and a fiery beacon of creative energy. In her own words, she was a supernova: *a star that suddenly increases greatly in brightness because of a catastrophic explosion that ejects most of its mass. A supernova is a transient astronomical event that occurs during the last stellar evolutionary stages of a massive star's life, whose dramatic and catastrophic destruction is marked by one final titanic explosion.* – (definition by wikipedia)

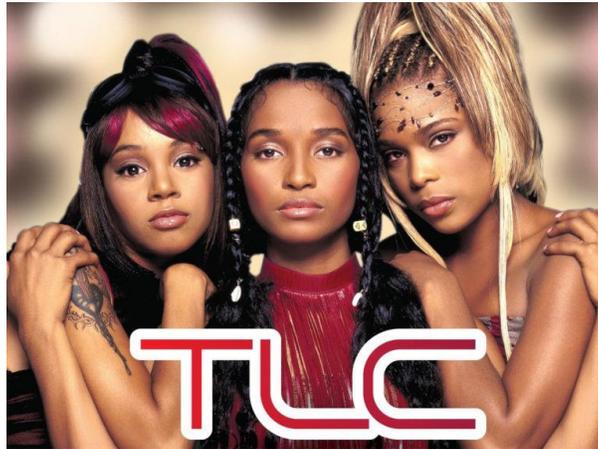


During a trip in Honduras, Lisa Lopes died in an unfortunate automobile accident on April 25, 2002. She was celebrated by millions of fans and honored for her contributions by several of her peers, luminaries and contemporaries in the entertainment industry. Sixteen years later, the life and work of Lisa Lopes is still being remembered and celebrated on a deeper plateau, beyond the stardom, celebrity, hit records, videos and radio nostalgia.



Actor and playwright Kerisse Hutchinson understands the type of discipline and diligence that has to be met when workshopping and developing a theatrical performance based on the life of Lisa “Left-Eye” Lopes. A New York City native, Kerisse began working, researching and developing the project since 2011, which even included a trip to Honduras. The playwright was determined to unveil a deeper connection to Lisa. According

to Kerisse, “It’s an entertaining and inspiring story of the spiritual journey of transformation and revelation.” For nearly eight years Kerisse has been dedicated to reimagining the life of one of the most intriguing artists of our time and is serious about portraying the most accurate depiction of Lopes. Like Tupac Shakur, Lopes was an enigma. She was heralded and praised for her beauty, poise and connectivity to community, but publicly scorned for her flagrance, outlandish honesty and outspoken truth.



2 The Left is a poignant, one-woman-symphony that extracts the pain and the playfulness from Lopes, while examining the true makings of a supernova. Produced via partnership with Synchronicity Theater’s Stripped Bare: An Arts Incubator series in Atlanta, Georgia, Kerisse received the support and space to flesh out her vision. With the help of director, Thomas W. Jones, choreographer, Victor Jackson and Dramaturgist, Addae Moon, *2 The Left* was on the right course. Through this revealing workshop lab, Kerisse miraculously finds a way to recreate the deconstruction of a star. Deconstructing the rise and fall of Lisa “Left-Eye” Lopes can be a daunting task. Kerisse cleverly utilizes a quadrilateral theme to frame and manipulate Lisa’s esoteric and introspective spiritual journey. Four music stands were the props of choice, magically breathing life into the performance. By strategically placing the music stands around the stage in a trapezoidal pattern, a sacred shrine or ancestral symbiosis is achieved.

“I MADE 2 THE LEFT A ONE WOMAN SHOW BECAUSE, WELL, THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THEATER. HAVING THE ARTIST’S AND THE AUDIENCE’S SPIRITS VIBING TOGETHER... IT GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY SHOWCASE LISA.” SAYS KERISSE.



As a solo performance, I was impressed by Kerisse's fortitude. Her ability to quickly switch into various modes or inflections was remarkable to say the least. Although it was an imperfect workshop performance, the execution was flawed only by limitations of breath and fertility of design. It was practical. And, it was ambitious. The play represents the trials and tribulations of an anti-heroine's victory, though, not unscathed. Still, she manages to captivate the entire audience with a sincere level of intensity. A combination of classic urban griot, shapeshifting monologues and powerful storytelling made this show aesthetically interesting. Kerisse credits Roger Guenveur Smith and his amazing one-man portrayal of Huey P. Newton in *A Huey P. Newton Story* adaptation by Spike Lee as her main inspiration. She also highlights thespians such as Whoopie Goldberg and John Leguizamo for their incredible solo theatrical performances.



Kerisse has a gift that spiritually channels Lisa. It was actually a little uncanny and a bit unsettling. The presence of Lisa's spirit was evident throughout the nearly two-hour narrative as she orchestrated acrobatics with her dialect and emotions. You could feel Lisa all over the place. There was an eerie, quirky darkness that loomed, hovering in spite of the theatrical lighting. It almost felt like a paranormal seance. In addition to me being sensitive to my own clairvoyance, I also knew Lisa personally. I had the pleasure of working with her during the 1996 Olympic Games and the launch of her company Left Eye Productions. Lisa was in the process of developing artists such as Je Ne Sais Quoi and Blaque.



For this reason, I admit that Kerisse was channeling Left-Eye's spirit a little more than I would like. There were times I got the chills because the likeness between Lisa and Kerisse were so close. Even the random spurts of excitement, cadence, banter and mood swings were all extremely persuasive. Through a heartfelt delivery, she deals with and pushes past troubled and tormented relationships, violence, alcohol abuse. She time travels through the nineties using hip hop, pop and R&B nostalgia as the backdrop.



photo courtesy Kerisse Hutchinson

Lisa Lopes was mentally on warp speed, so to keep pace and the audience consumed, Kerisse implemented fourth wall breaking "Left-Eye-isms." By adopting these applicable "*left-eye-isms*," she was able to somewhat explain or breakdown rationale, sensibilities or justification to the audience. To carve out idiosyncrasies in ourselves and others, what a brave, bold and daring way to catharsis. This is courageous healing at it's highest tribute. An amazing display of dexterity, Kerisse will exhaust you with all things Left Eye, but it will still have you hanging on to every word, phrase and quote.

“LEFT-EYE-ISM #5: EVERY TIME THERE IS A STRUGGLE, IT IS JUST PREPARATION FOR WHAT IS TO COME.”



Victor Jackson and Kerisse Hutchinson discuss chemistry and movement -photo by Al Shaw Ki

As a gesture of support for the project, Kerisse reached out to friends and family members of Lopes to maintain a high level of integrity and truth regarding depicting the artist. Impressed with Kerisse’s passion and dedication, Ronald Lopes provided a written approval and blessings to move forward.

“As younger brother to the late Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes, I am excited to express my unwavering support for Kerisse and her play “2 The Left”. Kerisse has done an amazing job of capturing elements of Lisa’s personality and creating a theatrical production. She has put all her heart and passion into her work.... I believe Kerisse’s play will, at last, let the world get to know the authentic Lisa Lopes, thus continuing her legacy and her message of maintaining a healthy body, mind, and soul.... We are pleased to offer Kerisse our continued support during the development and execution of her project about our beloved Lisa. She has proven herself time and again to be an invaluable asset. In my humble opinion, Kerisse is exactly the type of person able to execute a project such as this and reach audiences across the globe.”~Ronald Lopes

Playbill reads: *“Dedicated 2 The Left in us. What would you fight for? What would you live for? What will your legacy be....”*

As a closing statement to the Q and A session after the performance, an audience member asks what people should take away from this project. Kerisse replies “Audiences should challenge life. That is the takeaway from the show.”

This show is crazy, sexy cool! Be on the look out for future workshops and performances near you.

2 The Left: A Tribute to the life of Lisa “Left-Eye” Lopes

About Kerisse Hutchinson



Kerisse is a multi-talented award-winning actress, dancer, and writer from New York City. She received her dance training at the Alvin Ailey School. Theatrical achievements include: Trojan Woman (Drama Desk Award), Macbeth (Classical Theatre of Harlem) in Germany, and the starring role in the hip-hop musical, Honey Bo and the Goldmine by Will Power (La Jolla Playhouse, CA) where she showcased her acting, dancing, singing, and rapping talents. Film credits include: the Gotham Award-nominated August the First (Best Actress Award (SXSW)); Rise of the Zombies (Sy-Fy Channel); Dough Boys (Paramount/BET); and The Janky Promoters (Weinstein Co). Television credits include: recurring on “All My Children,” and guest starring on “The Defenders,” “Law & Order: SVU,” and “The Whole Truth.” Kerisse also founded the nonprofit GuiDANCE Autism, Inc., bringing the joy of dance to children with special needs.

For more information about 2 The Left visit [HERE](#)

For more information Synchronicity Theater visit [HERE](#)

By ASK

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