



ISRAEL GIG: The Stars from The Commitments

Commitments star in awe of Jerusalem

DESPITE selling more than 12 million albums worldwide, The Commitments guitarist Kenneth McCluskey was still in 'awe' of Jerusalem when he performed there last year.

Kenneth, who found fame in 1992 playing Derek 'The Meatman' Scully in the BAFTA award-winning film, was performing at the Jerusalem Rocks! Peace Festival last September, headlined by hip-hop act The Black Eyed Peas.

He explained: "I have a colleague based in New York who organises conferences. The last time we saw him, he told us he was organising a peace conference in Jerusalem and asked us if we'd be interested in performing with The Black Eyed Peas.

"We said it would be an honour, although we asked if it would work between their music and our own."

He added: "I really didn't know what to expect — unfortunately my knowledge of the area is limited. I was really looking forward to seeing Jerusalem because I find its history so interesting.

"After the show, we were given a guided tour of the city. I've never been anywhere so old and biblical — I was in awe of the place.

"The people were very friendly and the atmosphere was so calm and relaxed that it surprised me. The media blows things out of all proportion and certain things get over-hyped."

Kenneth, who has toured with The Stars from The Commitments for the last 15 years, was particularly impressed with the female soldiers.

"We saw loads of girls, about 17 or 18-years-old, with a Kalashnikov in one hand and an ice-cream in the other," he said. "We talked to them and had photos taken with them and they weren't aggressive at all. It's just part of their culture and society and the soldiers were very chilled and welcoming."

But did anyone in Israel even know who The Commitments were? He replied: "When we played *Mustang Sally*, the audience started singing the chorus with us. It made me very happy and I was honoured that people still know who we are.

"The next night, our promoter asked us to go to a jam session in Tel Aviv and all the other musicians there knew The Commitments as well."

The Stars from The Commitments are now preparing to play at the Stockport Plaza, Manchester, on Thursday, July 10.

"We're gonna play the songs that people like, the big hits," Kenneth said. "We have also made a live album of songs that aren't in the film and we'll incorporate some of them into our show.

The *Jewish Telegraph* is giving four lucky readers the chance to attend the concert — and to meet the band.

We have two pairs of tickets for the Stockport Plaza gig on July 10. In addition, the two winners will receive signed CDs of The Commitments' soundtrack and will meet the band back stage before the show.

To enter, tell us who directed the film *The Commitments*.

■ Send your answer to The Commitments competition, *Jewish Telegraph*, 11 Park Hill, Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 0HH or email competitions@jewishtelegraph.com by July 4. Please include a contact day-time phone number.