Ms. Fabulosity herself was in the building at the historic Karamu House Saturday night during the opening weekend of the theater's four-week run of "The Color Purple." Dressed in one of the season's hottest numbers – a navy, long-sleeved mini – she was quite the fashionista as she addressed the crowd during a reception before the performance.

Onward, upward and now… Forward

By FELICIA C. HANEY

Staff Reporter

“I grew up in St. Louis, which is not the same as Hollywood or Paris or New York. Where I grew up is similar to Cleveland. And where I grew up, we do not want to be left behind. I represent that 47 percent. That’s *us* he (Mitt Romney) was talking about. And that’s what I’m here to remind y’all. We will not be forgotten. We will not be written off.

Remember where we come from. And a play like [‘The Color Purple’] should help you to reflect upon this as well. We are here to stay and we will get this brother Barack Obama back in office. Four more years!” – Kimora Lee Simmons

Ms. Fabulosity herself was in the building at the historic Karamu House Saturday night during the opening weekend of the theater’s four-week run of “The Color Purple.” Dressed in one of the season’s hottest numbers – a navy, long-sleeved mini – she was quite the fashionista as she addressed the crowd during a reception before the performance. On the down slope of a long day of campaigning in Cleveland, her “Vote for Obama” speech had become just as flawless as her new figure – which looks more like her old modelesque one. After she handed the mic off to the original Shug Avery (actress Margaret Avery), who was on hand to christen Karamu’s big night and also represent for Obama, KLS (don’t forget to add the H) sat down with CP2 for an exclusive interview.

Remember where you heard it first!

CP2: Thanks for coming out to Cleveland. I know the weather’s not great but I hope we at

least gave you a warm welcome…

Did you all forget about fall? Feels like you just went straight to winter! But no, Cleveland has been lovely.

First time in Cleveland?

No. But it's my first time in over a year.

You've been a pretty busy worker bee for the Obama campaign. What are some of the stops you made here in Cleveland?

I went to the university (Cleveland State). I went to Abyssinia Church, I talked to volunteers who were out canvassing the community, knocking door-to-door. I talked to volunteers who were calling up people on the phones. I talked to young kids who were too young to vote all the way up to 90 year olds about the importance of voting and taking advantage of voting early. I've

been to Jezebel's Bayou restaurant and now I'm here at Karamu for the opening of this classic play (The Color Purple).

A lot of celebrities are hesitant to get involved with politics because it could possibly hurt their career. What made you decide to openly back Obama?

I definitely never felt that way. I'm a businesswoman and an entrepreneur, a small business owner if you would. Being an entrepreneur is really what's important to me. I'm known for being outspoken and opinionated and honest with my fans and the public so there's no secret about what we're doing. For me it's about using what I have to try and bring visibility to the cause; by using my voice and my influence to get those people who are oftentimes young, oftentimes people of color and oftentimes people who are not considered – the mixed kid, the mutt kid, the LGBT community – And right now is golden week, so we have to get those who aren't registered, registered. And get those early votes!

You have a unique make up yourself. You represent a lot of minorities be it women, Asians, African Americans… What about voting for Obama is representative most of those issues?

Well, first and foremost it's important just based on who I am and who I represent. But it's not just about how you look; it's about standing up for those who were cast aside. We are that 47 percent, and most times that is people of color; and regardless of what that color is, there are

some issues that we all have. And in terms of voting, I think it means so much more when I look like them and I know their issues and share some of their same ideas. I think that vision is important. As women who do the same jobs, and sometimes better, if we will still have to argue over equal pay and equal rights then where are we going? We're hustling backwards.

How did you feel personally when you heard the "47 percent" audio?

Personally I just thought, "Wow, someone said that?" And [Mitt Romney] has definitely backtracked from it more and more everyday since he said it. And even now, just a short while after, he acts as if it didn't occur. What I heard was shocking to me. As I thought about it, I thought "that's me. That's my family, my children – my 'African'-American, from West Africa, mixed son who's just like the President. That's us that you're forgetting, including all of the other children I've seen on this campaign trail. We're not invisible as women, as people of color, as elderly people, as children and people in need of healthcare. Right from wrong transcends politics and I speak up for those human rights. That's what we do in the hip-hop community and we're not going anywhere.

You brought up your son, and he is less than four years old so Barack Obama is the first president that he will ever know. How does that feel for you as mom when most people in our generation never thought we'd even see that day?

Ummm, the word progressive just comes to mind. It shows how far we've come but really… It's long overdue. That is something I'm proud to have my children see.

Even though you support the president, are you in favor of him proposing that those that make more than $200,000 pay more taxes? Don't want to count anyone's pockets but, it's safe to say you fall in that tax bracket.

Well, that is an important part of the message and it's the reason why I'm here. Without that system in place, I wouldn't be here. I feel like to whom much is given, much is expected and I don't mind helping, encouraging, supporting my fellow man – someone who's down and out and needs it. I'm fine. So, if I have to pay a little more to help someone else who needs it then… That's what I'm going to do.

What else is going on in the life of KLSH?

I have a new show launching this winter; it's called "House of Fab." That's a spin off from "Life in the Fab Lane." And I think most people know, but if they don't… I moved on from Baby Phat and Russell [Simmons] has as well. We sold the company a long time ago. I have a new venture, Just Fab, which is fashion – clothes, accessories, shoes – and you can find it at justfab.com. I have a new skin care line at Nordstrom called Shinto Clinical. So, I'm raising three

kids, I'm running down the campaign trail, I'm launching my new show around January, so I'm staying busy. Upward and onward, that's how you become fabulous from the inside out.

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