

## Bite Me! Music + Fashion



Ambitious and talented are just two words to describe Nikkole. This down-to-earth beauty began her career in 2001 and has managed to stay true to herself over the years. With 10 albums under her belt the DIY singer/songwriter/ producer/performer has established herself as a respected artist among her peers. Her music, which has been described as old school blended with a contemporary pop/urban sound, appeals to music lovers of all generations, and her unique voice is accentuated by an impressive 5-octave range. Nikkole's latest release, *Double Deluxe Vol 1. (EP)*, contains sizzling remixes in addition to two new smokin' tracks. Plus, it was manufactured with 100% recycled materials. You gotta love that.

### **How did you get your start in the music industry?**

I got my start in the industry as a background singer. I would sing for anyone who asked, just to gain the knowledge of what working musicians/singers need to know to be in the business. Then, I would always tell the producer or artist that I had an idea (which really meant I want to write a song for you!!!) I really enjoy the creative process of writing and coming up with melodies.

### **As an independent artist who has released albums for 10 years what advice do you have for other artists/bands that want to go the indie route?**

First, you have to want it more than anything, have thick skin, and be smart about all of your choices. It is not JUST about the desire to make music; you have to remember this is the business of music too. Planning and order is key in your organization of having your own label. Read and learn as much about the legal aspects of the business and absorb what your associates may know (and by this I mean the people who are actually making a living from music). Follow your heart and remain true to your own style. Release quality music that is well produced, mixed, and mastered with a clear sound quality. WOW...there are so many areas I want to hit on...I could go on for

days.

I have wanted a music career since I was a young child and with all of the choices that I have made they somehow reflect how I feel about my career. In saying that, I believe that I have laid a path of goals for myself, and all I want to do is attain them.

Since I started out as an indie artist I have seen quite a few changes in the industry, as more independent musicians are able to release their own product to the masses. And, now it's cool to be an indie artist (it wasn't so much the case 10 years ago). But, I feel that we still have a long way to go. I would like to see all qualified musicians (major and indie) on an even playing field when it comes to radio airplay and promotions... and that is another story!!!

**You just released *Double Deluxe Vol 1. (EP)* - What can people expect to hear on this album?**

On my latest studio outing, the *Double Deluxe Vol. 1 (EP)*, I am bringing forth two new singles: "I Wanna Be" and "Are You Satisfied?" Whether you're feeling reminiscent or you are ready to get down this EP has you covered. Also, the *Double Deluxe Vol. 1 (EP)* will be the first in a series of releases that we are planning at my label. This release includes remixes of my brand new single "Are You Satisfied?" from the 'Creolepatra' CD, as well as another brand new single entitled "I Wanna Be," which has a "radio edit" and an "unplugged" version. In addition to the "radio/album" version of "Are You Satisfied?" there are three hot remix versions including the "Funk'dafied Mix," the "DP Mix," and the "Supa Freak Club Mix." In essence, it is a double hitter! In addition, we are going 'Green' at SE Entertainment Records by using recycled materials to manufacture the new release. Because we are using all recycled materials we are servicing the *Double Deluxe Vol. 1* single to radio digitally and in recycled cardboard jackets, which do not use a plastic jewel case.

**Where can people purchase the album in addition to your other releases?**

I strive to keep a strong online presence in this digital age. My music can be purchased at several e-stores such as: iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby, e-music, <http://www.nikkole.com/>, <http://www.seeinc.tv/>, and the list goes on! Some of my releases are also available at some retail stores; although, as we all know, many music

stores are falling by the wayside.



**You've collaborated with a number of influential people. What was one of your most memorable experiences?**

I would say my collaborations with The Emotions have been my most memorable studio experiences. The Emotions' music has always been a staple in my household, as my mom would play classics so that we would understand the soul of good music. I met The Emotions through the legendary Producer Lee Young, Sr. who worked with the trio on a few of their later projects. The ladies welcomed my brother and I into their family like we were their own kids and ever since then we have enjoyed them as family. One day, I told Wanda Vaughn of the group that I had some songs I wanted them to listen to for their own CD project and she was very open to the idea and absolutely loved the songs. So, there was no doubt in my mind that when I asked them to join me on "It's Too Late" (from my *A Girl Like Me* CD) that I would get an emphatic yes! They came into my studio and were amazing. I will always remember that session as one of the best days in my recording history.

**You've received quite a number of GRAMMY nominations. How does it feel to be nominated?**

As a contender for the coveted GRAMMY Award I felt so proud to know that my peers were identifying my musical contributions with such an esteemed appreciation. I had always dreamed of the moment of being recognized by NARAS, even with my first release in 2001, "Appearances," and to have my latest CD *Creolepatra* become a candidate for nomination in 8 categories was a privilege – a dream come true, especially for an indie artist without a major label backing my product!

**As a member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences can you tell me what the voting process is like?**

A voting member or label submits qualifying material to the academy in the appropriate categories. Then the music is screened by NARAS for 1st round ballot consideration. Once your music makes the approved list then voting members of the

Academy are asked to vote on which songs/artist makes the final cut.

**Are you allowed to vote for yourself?**

Yes

**You have an impressive five octave range. Did you receive any formal training?**

Thank you! No, I have never received any formal vocal training. I grew up singing in church and emulating the amazing singers like Minnie Ripperton, Natalie Cole, Smokey Robinson, Phyllis Hyman, and Steve Perry that I often heard playing in my household. My parents listened to all types of music, so my stylings and tastes were very broad because of that.

**Cosmopolitan named you as one of its top 10 Fearless Female Rockstars. What earned you that honor?**

I entered a video contest where thousands of talented indie artists submitted performances of them singing original songs and my submission was chosen by a board of music industry veterans and a panel of editors at the magazine. Once they reviewed the numerous entries 10 lucky ladies were chosen as one of the Top 10 Female Rockstars, and I was one of them!

**Did traffic to your website increase after that issue came out?**

Yes, traffic to my website really increased in addition to a huge peak in my record sales. The contest broadened my audience and helped my fan base grow immensely. Thank you Cosmo :)

**You're currently endorsing MINX Nails. What do you like about MINX?**

The Minx line is amazingly pioneering! It is the perfect accessory for any outfit. I love the fact the Minx works effortlessly with whatever life throws my way. My lifestyle is busy. I never know what's coming next, so once my nails are Minxed I can go straight from a recording session to an evening performance without worrying about my nails. Minx Nails brings an "eye catching" look and that is a must in the entertainment

world. My nail stylist, Chris Flowers always hooks me up with his very artistic and creative sense of style.

### **Describe your personal style in regards to fashion?**

My musical style is soulful and emotional, so that gives me the freedom to be flexible with my approach to my style. I've been told that my image is a "down to earth diva"! I pull from fashion icons of the past and present and interject my own ideas to identify me as the "Nikkole" that I know I am inside.



### **Who are some of your favorite designers?**

I enjoy various designers for their energy and chic flair, but some of my all time favorites are:

Tom Ford for Gucci– I adore his sunglasses. They have a confident style and feel.

Marc Jacobs for LV – His designs are fun and vibrant.

[Claire Jane \(ICJ\)](#) – I love her mixture of uptown elegance with the Rock-n-roll vibe.

Christopher Bailey for Burberry – You can feel the spirit in his designs.

### **Do you have any tours/performances lined up for the summer?**

Yes, I have been doing quite a few performance dates over the last year at various festivals and corporate events. Be sure and check my calendar for my upcoming shows. I really enjoy performing live and connecting with the audience.

### **What would you most like to be remembered for?**

I have a few things that I would like to be remembered for...I would like to be remembered as someone who did her best in life and followed her heart - someone who was honest and caring with a willingness to stand up for what I believe is right; for my strength of faith, and for being ME. And, for living my life to the fullest and achieving my full potential. I believe our every action has an effect on the people around us and society at large.

For more on Nikkole visit <http://www.nikkole.com/>

Interview by Nikki Neil, Photos courtesy of Nikkole