

Liv and let Liv

*A conversation
with Portland's
sultriest chanteuse
Liv Warfield*



PHOTO BY INGER.NET

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Sultry, smoky, soulful and smooth – sentiments that flow effortlessly between the tone and timber of Liv Warfield's amazing voice. She is a Portland original, albeit a transplant from the Midwest, one who was not only inspired by her Northwest contemporaries, but who inspired others with her debut album, "Embrace Me."

In 2008, her rising star caught the attention of Prince – yes, that Prince. Warfield sent Prince an audition tape of her singing the Rolling Stones, "Gimme Shelter." By January of 2009 she was invited to Paisley Park (Prince's Studios) and shortly after, one of her first performances with Prince was on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno.

She's also embarked on two projects of her own: One is The Liv Warfield Experience, featuring a collage of stellar local musicians to back up her signature sultry voice. Another is collaborating with local Portland designer, Bianca Pettinari to release her own line of women's handbags. We caught up with the singer to talk about her love of music, performing and her adopted hometown of Portland.

Sue Zalokar: *Girl, you are a long way from your*

hometown of Peoria, Ill. The same drive and determination that brought out that remarkable voice you have, first led you to become an Olympic-caliber sprinter and gymnast. Tell me about the journey to Portland.

Liv Warfield: Oh wow. The journey to Portland was interesting. I came to Portland for two things: Love and a track scholarship. Both of those things were not good for me! They both went sour. Meaning, he went one way, I went another, and so did track and field. I felt as if I was doing sports all of my life and I wanted to do something that was secretly in my spirit and that was to perform and sing! That indeed started my late-night karaoke runs to the Galaxy and Ambassador in Portland.

S.Z.: *You grew up in a Pentecostal household, the daughter of a deacon of the Pentecostal Church of Jesus. As I understand it, music isn't really a part of the Pentecostal paradigm. How did you find that sultry, strong, sexy voice?*

L.W.: Well, Music was very much a part of my upbringing. I grew up listening to the late Rev. James Cleveland and The Hawkins family. My mother's side of the family was very, very strong in the church. But I was too nervous to sing in front

of people – too shy! I do remember the first singer I fell in love with and that was Etta James. When I heard her voice in the movie "Rainman," I lost it. I wanted to sound like her and Whitney Houston. Also, I would always sneak music into my tape player too, or listen to the smooth jams on our radio really low. That way my parents wouldn't hear me listen to secular music! My father was very much into music as well, but he got "saved" and he didn't play all of his reel-to-reels he kept from me until I got older.

I didn't really find my voice until I moved out to Portland. Portland was like the awakening for me! It was a new place that I could be myself.

S.Z.: *You released the single, "Freedom" last year on CDBaby. You sing, "My voice I'll use to paint a picture of peace again." How do you use your voice as a tool for change?*

L.W.: You know, I love to sing about love songs and all that mushy stuff, but the song "Freedom" was a message. It woke me in the middle of the night. I love my rest and believe me I wanted to stay sleep, but it was one of those nights that the spirit pushed and pushed at my gut and told me to

"Writing is a freedom. We forget that. It's a luxury that most of my ancestors fought for."

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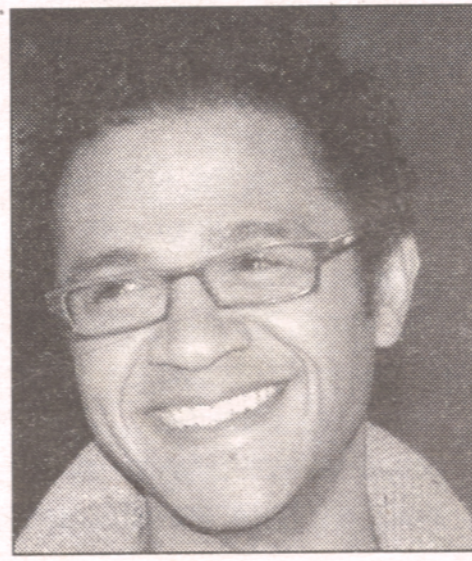
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