

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

## R&B Soulstress Michel'le

R&B Soulstress Michel'le Made A Return Performance On August 2

Michel'le, the cherished artist who dazzled the universe with powerful R&B vocals and massive hits, performed at the NAACP "Fighters Grand Ball" on August 2 at the lavish Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas. This was Michel'le's first live performance previewing new material from her long-awaited Death Row Records release, *Hung Jury*. Greg Rose, formerly of Motown act The Rose Brothers, also performed.

Michel'le became part of the Death Row family in the mid-90's and has spent her time writing and recording the twelve tracks on *Hung Jury*. In a classic R&B style inspired by legends such as Patti LaBelle and Anita Baker, Michel'le takes us on a sweet and soulful journey through her life with a mix of slow, sexy and mid-tempo gems. *Hung Jury* was produced by Reginald Devell Moore and Michel'le with Executive Producer Suge Knight. Prior to this, the soulful songstress made her first mark as an artist on Eazy E's Ruthless Records with two gold singles, "Nicety" and "No More Lies," the platinum single "Something In My Heart," and the nearly double platinum album *Michel'le*.



Michel'le

## MARY LOU LORD

Even with her major debut and lots of attention from the likes of Rolling Stone and Spin, you can still find Mary Lou Lord singing and playing her battered Martin in her favorite venue, the subway -- a place where, as she sings in her song of the same name, "there's no sun and no starlight to shine on the rails...the wheels of reality screech down the track." Nothing if not real, Mary Lou regularly finds herself on the platform of Park Street Station in Boston, oblivious to the smell of diesel hanging in the air, her astonishingly intimate voice cutting through the hiss of the trains and reaching into the ragged souls of down-under, hurried and sometimes harried commuters.

As a kid in Salem, MA, by far the youngest of five children, she was left to the lackadaisical supervision of her teenage siblings while her parents worked the night shift. "I was alone too much," she says now. "There was too much time to think, so I'd just listen to music to feel better." She cemented her relationship to music at an early age, starting as a teenage DJ at the local college radio station. She quit after they discovered she wasn't following the playlist. Her response? "I don't want to spin g\*d da\*n vinyl anyway. I want to make what's on it!" After a stint at Boston's Berklee School of Music she became a tireless and legendary performer in Harvard Square, and at subway stops throughout Boston and Cambridge,



Mary Lou Lord

eventually expanding her territory to include a few local clubs, and selling homemade tape along the way.

Listening to Mary Lou, whether from the comfort of your couch or leaning against a girder in the subway, you know immediately that you're the recipient of a gift. Mary Lou is one of those rare artists who

can speak to you in a voice that both gives comfort and registers pain. She knows that solace and pleasure come from doing the real work and following the authentic route -- a path that tracks passion and moves through love like the 5:15 that hurtles into the dirty subway station where Mary Lou still, to this day, plays her heart out.

## Tami Davis



"I'm a little scared, a little nervous... It's up to the public, and of course I want them to say I like her, I like the way she sings, she makes me feel something."

Tami Davis, elegant yet earthy, a combination down-homesoul sister and sophisticated lady, is talking about her solo debut. As she sits, nibbling on a much-needed bit of lunch at a West Hollywood hotel, she is expressing an understandable mixture of child-like anticipation and trepidation. Although she's worked with a number of high profile artists throughout her burgeoning career, this is, after all, her own album. Her very first. And she's excited.

An admitted night-bird, Davis has been awaking early these days to meet the demands of being a solo recording artist. Today she is reflecting on what it's taken to get to this point as she follows in the great tradition of stars whose rise to fame began on the backlines. Mariah Carey, Sheryl Crow, Luther Vandross, Paula Cole, CeCe Peniston, to name but

a few, all kick started their enviable careers as background vocalists. Like her predecessors, Davis' special talent shone through so bright, it was clear early on that her days as a backup singer for the likes of Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Aretha Franklin and Toni Braxton were going to be numbered. "I've been really lucky," she humbly acknowledges. "People - other artists, producers, industry types - have believed in me from the start. And now that I've made the record I wanted to make, I'm kind of baring my soul. Putting it out there for the rest of the world."

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