

# MUSIC BOULEVARD

## Nicole Renée

Nicole Renée isn't just a singer. She's a writer, producer, arranger, and completely self-contained visionary who does it all (she had written 200 songs by the time she was ready to record her debut album for Atlantic Records). She doesn't just sing; she sings. If you don't know the difference you're in for a pleasant surprise. From the opening notes of "Telephone," the first track on Nicole Renée's self-titled album, it's clear that a major new talent is on the line. Her virtuosic vocal talent is quickly revealed in all of its stunning diversity: she moans and writhes, her voice a chameleon shifting from blue blue notes into spine-tingling falsetto with deceptive ease. As a person, Nicole Renée exudes a combination of boundless warmth and voracious intelligence; as a singer, she has the same mix: by turns, she rocks out like a furious head-banger, screams bloody murder in a way that reminds us that passion is one of nature's most powerful elements and coos delicately enough

to hold all of those disparate ingredients together in one, organic whole. And that's all within the first minute.

"NICOLE RENEE" is an album of subtle charms and obvious pleasures. Over the course of fifteen songs, "NICOLE RENEE" will lift you up, make you think, and have you dancing before you know what's hit you. We are treated to soul in all of its variations. In "Cocaine Lane," Nicole Renée compares a drug addict's relationship to coke with her own sense of religious devotion. "I asked a drug addict, 'What is it about this drug that would cause you to steal from your mother and lie and hurt people you love?'" Nicole Renée says. "And he said, it's something that's always there, something that loves you unconditionally. And I said, 'well that's the way that I feel about God.'" Such wisdom proves that Nicole isn't just about astonishing us with her vocal and musical pyrotechnics - she's a deep thinker with serious spiritual and philosophical insights to

share. Don't let the fact that she marries these keenly intelligent lyrics to such sensual and melodic music fool you. Nicole Renée really has it all. Of course, a talent like this doesn't just appear out of thin air.

In fact, Nicole has been in the public eye since her early adolescence, when she first began appearing on Black Entertainment Television as an original member of the posse from Teen Summit, a talk show hosted by teens. During her four-year stint on the program Nicole interviewed many of the brightest lights in R&B and rap, but it was her own singing that caught the ears of some music company executives visiting the show one day. "At the time I was a student of classical singing, and wasn't even interested in pop in fact, I was gearing up to go to a conservatory," Nicole recalls. "But some executives from a record company overheard me singing in the green room and soon I started getting all this interest from labels."



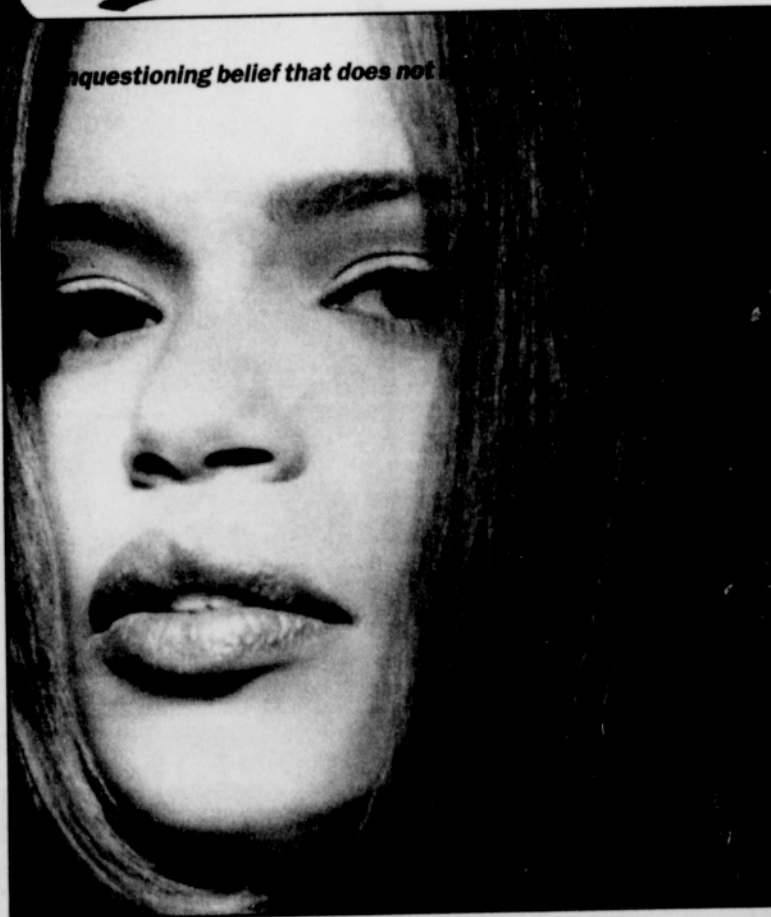
## The Faith

Ask her how she's come this far and she'll simply answer. "Faith. Faith has given me the strength to get to where I am now. It's allowed me to become the strong woman I am. I have faith in God I have faith in my abilities. I am what I am. I am Faith."

As anyone touch by the presence of things truly powerful and divine can testify, acts of faith are meant to be experienced. Such is the case with Faith Evan's sophomore album, *Keep The Faith*. Written and co-produced almost entirely by the 25 year old songwriter, producer and vocalist. *Keep The Faith* is a breathtaking tour de force in the tradition of vocal powerhouse Phyllis Hyman and Angela Bofill.

Faith's voice delivers emotions that are alternately sweet and loving, then visceral and raw - with a sincerity that strikes deep in the solar plexus.

With flawless production provided by David Foster, J-Dub, Ron Lawrence, Chucky Thompson, Babyface and Puff Daddy, *Keep The Faith* is poised to take its rightful place as one of the best R&B albums of the year. The single "Love Like This" has uptempo grooves guaranteed to conjure up memories of early '80s house party vibes. On lush ballads like "Lately I" and "Caramel



Kisses," Faith delivers riffs with a power and effortlessness that will make you feel every bit of her joy and know every bit of her pain. Faith's

superior vocal are designed to elicit unconditional emotional surrender. She's about to 'take you there,' whether you're trying to go or not.

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