

Liv Warfield to Unveil Designer Handbag Line

Local singer is adding fashion line to her rapidly growing list of accomplishments

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Of *The Skanner News*

It's been an eventful few years for Liv Warfield. She released her debut album in 2007. She joined Prince's New Power Generation. Now she's entering the fashion business.

Warfield will be unveiling her Liv Collection by BD503 line of designer handbags on Dec. 12.

"For me, I just want women to know when you carry these bags, whatever you're attracted to, whatever style you're drawn to, it has a meaning for you," she says. "These bags are edgy. They're sassy."

The handbags, hand-crafted in Portland, are made from repurposed leather and are designed to fit women's personal styles, says the singer.

According to Warfield, the idea for the line came about while she was attending FASHIONxt, one of the largest fashion shows in the nation, for a performance. She happened to meet designer Bianca Pettinari while looking through some of her handbags and they hit it off.

"We talked about how we see the normal handbags but there's no funk, no sassiness to the handbags," says Warfield. "But we also wanted to carry a meaning with that."

"For me they mean to live bold, live loud beautifully, live free. I want the women who carry these bags to feel like they're personally made for them."

This is Warfield's first endeavor into the world of fashion.

She's been busy, to say the least, with her music career.

As an independent artist she is constantly working to not just perfect her craft, but be her own promotion machine. The industry is changing, she says, and going independent is the best way to define one's self musically.

"Social media has taken on this huge, huge role," she says. "There are no limitations for artists right now."

"Being independent for me, is not having a label saying, 'You're this. You're neo-soul.' I hate that. I hate that word basically. I am soul period. I'm soul rock. I'm soul jazz. I'm soul electric. I can be any of those things. Independent for me defines that."

Warfield first began honing her skills in the early 2000s on Portland's karaoke scene.

Most of her early life was spent focused on athletics. She was a gymnast for 13-14 years and ran track. Originally from Peoria, IL, she moved to Portland after receiving a track scholarship from Portland State University (PSU).

Warfield didn't sing as a child but while she was in a process of finding herself, she decided to take a risk and sing at the city's karaoke bars. Initially, she would perform with her back turned to the crowd because she was so nervous. It's strange to look back on it now, she says, as she remembers being

at the bars from 8:00 at night to 4:00 in the morning Wednesdays through Sundays.

She soon discovered she had talent but things didn't get serious until a friend took her to see Linda Hornbuckle. Warfield was blown away and stared at the legendary singer for hours on end. She would go to watch Hornbuckle every week and eventually the singer invited her on stage.

"Linda brought me up on stage and my back was turned to the audience," says Warfield. "She told me, 'Next time you sing you have to turn to the audience.'"

"I would just keep going there. Linda was and still is a big inspiration for why I was just so motivated."

Hornbuckle even convinced Warfield to start her own band. She never considered it until the legend floated the idea to her. Shortly after, she put fliers up all over the PSU campus, looking for interested musicians. She says things progressed gradually and she began getting regular gigs.

In a relatively short period of time, Warfield found herself sharing the stage with big name artists like B.B. King, The Roots and Floetry.

This culminated in the release of her debut LP Embrace Me in 2007.

The moment that has stood out to her the most in this run is when she got the call from Prince, inviting her to join the New Power Generation.

"I never even thought ever that I would get a call," says Warfield. "Ever. It's kind of mind blowing."

Warfield is quick to acknowledge that her success has been the result of a lot of people helping and giving her opportunities. She says the key to helping more local artists break through is working together.

"Portland has a big, amazing community of amazing musicians and singers," says Warfield. "I think it's important that we work together to help each other out and



LIV Warfield with BD503 bags

promote each other.

"There was a time in Motown where they were all in a bus. They had their own different types of style of music but they all made it work. We don't have that anymore. The touring isn't there. To me, touring is important. Everybody can have access to your music but I think now people want to see you live. Create those groups now and travel together, that's how you create your buzz. That's how I would do it."

Warfield and Pettinari will be holding a launch party for the Liv Collection by BD503 at the Olympic Mills Commerce Center on Dec. 12. Her group The Liv Warfield Xperience will be performing at the Alberta Rose Theater Dec. 13. She encourages people to bring toys, which the group will be donating to the Fox 12 Toy Drive.

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