



Solange

Solo Star

Solange Knowles remembers the first time she performed in public. She was just 4 years old and a member of a Houston children's dance troupe that she'd joined at the age of 2 and half. The troupe was in a local competition and when Solange hit the stage, she soaked up the attention and support of the audience. "I knew right then," Solange smiles, "that I loved being up there and that I wanted to entertain."

12 years later, Solange has lived her dream and -- armed with a confidence and creativity belying her youth -- become a rising young star. A **Solo Star**. Solange's list of achievements is notable. She's an accomplished songwriter and producer. She spent the summer of 2001 hosting the very first MTV TRL tour starring Destiny's Child and featuring Jessica Simpson, Nelly, Eve, Dream, City High and 3 LW. She's been featured on television and her striking sense of style has been highlighted in Teen People, Vogue, Seventeen, YM, Honey and J-14. She's toured the world as a key dancer with Destiny's Child, the platinum plus Grammy winning vocal act led by her older sister Beyoncé, and written and produced songs for DC's Kelly Rowland including the title track from Kelly's debut solo album, Simply Deep. And now.. there's Solange's own sparkling debut, **Solo Star**.

Featuring songs and production from the Neptunes, Timbaland, Beyoncé Knowles, Kandi Burruss (TLC), Rockwilder, Linda Perry (Pink) and Solange and guest appearances from B2K, N.O.R.E., Murphy Lee (St Lunatics), Da Brat, and rising young rapper Lil' Romeo (on the beautiful "True Love"), ***Solo Star*** is an eclectic and exciting musical experience, delivered by a gifted and blessed young woman. "This record is a representation of my life," Solange says, "It's a real sense of who I am, right now and how I feel."

The first single is the banging up-tempo jam "Feelin' You (Part I & II)" which was co-produced and co-written by Solange with Beyoncé and "(PART II)" features N.O.R.E. In fact, Solange herself wrote the treatment for the groundbreaking video for the track. Like many of the songs on ***Solo Star***, "Feelin' You (Part I & II)" deals with emotions and love; in this case, wanting "that special person" to just give you a chance. "As soon as I heard the track," Solange says, "I knew that the song would become something that really represented me, because of all of the different influences from Arabic to reggae to hip-hop. I really wanted to show people that I'm more than just another R&B singer and that many things make up my sound and this song is perfect to do just that."

Also close to Solange's heart are "This Could Be Love" and "I Used To." "This Could Be Love" was co-written by Solange and produced by newcomer Troy Johnson. The emotional song, which Solange describes as being "really soulful and meaningful," is an ode to true love and has a romantic flavor that is universal. On the flip side of love is "I Used To," which was co-produced by Alonzo Jackson and Solange and co-written by Solange. Edgy and energetic, "I Used To" breaks down a relationship and captures that moment when you're trying to figure out if the love was real or not. "That 's a tight track," Solange offers. "And it's got some attitude."

Solo Star also boasts collaborations with the Neptunes, who deliver the lilting "Crush," and Timbaland, who steps forth with the hip shaking "Get Together." Working with these established producers was a new experience for Solange, who calls herself a bit of a control freak in the studio. "I have to say it was hard at first to hand over the creative control to some one else, 'cause I really like producing my own vocals. But the songs turned out great and I'm really happy with the results."

Solange was born and raised in Houston, Texas. A student of dance and theatre from an early age, Solange credits her dancing instructor in helping to groom her towards becoming an all around entertainer. Inspired by Janet Jackson ("I even had a knock-off Janet Jackson outfit!," she laughs), Solange made her public singing debut when she was 5, belting out Shanice's "I Love Your Smile" at a local amusement park. "Anywhere my sisters were singing, my dad would try and get me on the bill as well. I'd open up for them even when they were opening up for someone else."

Precociously talented, Solange started writing lyrics at the age of 7 and by the time she hit 12, was already piecing together melodies from the tracks that producers sent Destiny's Child. "I knew that songwriting and production was something that I wanted to explore," Solange recalls. "Being in the studio is the fun part for me."

When Solange turned 13, she told her parents that she wanted to actively pursue singing, but her family advised her to wait, sensing that the young teen wouldn't want to sacrifice her school and social life for the rigors of performing. As fate would have it, that same year one of Destiny Child's dancers became pregnant four days before the group was about to embark on a major tour. Unable to audition and rehearse a replacement dancer in such a short amount of time, Beyoncé suggested that Solange should fill in. Suddenly 13-year-old Solange was touring with the biggest girl group of the late 90's and spent the following two

years dancing around the world. Unbeknownst to Solange, the gig was also a chance for her parents to gauge how their younger daughter could handle the demands of show business. "My parents said that if I could deal with all the hard work without complaining, than we could see about getting me record deal." By the time Solange was 16 a deal was in place and work on **Solo Star** began.

Asked if there's any message she wants to impart and Solange is thoughtful. " I'd like people to hear the maturity, both in the range of music and the lyrics. That I'm not just another teen singer and that I really put a lot of myself into my music. That's why I really think it's important that young people do for themselves and not allow anyone to shape them or create them. I've had to really stand my own ground with this record, listen to different points of view, even from my own family but at the end I had the confidence to stand by my choices and stand for myself. That's what **Solo Star** is all about. Being true to yourself and your vision."

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