

Cultural Daily

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Kandace Springs: a Jazz Singer with a Rock Star Vibe

Steve Gottfried · Wednesday, March 18th, 2020

Kandace Springs is a soulful jazz singer who's definitely one to watch. With two albums under her belt and a 3rd ready to drop, this 31-year-old chanteuse has a deep and abiding respect for the past with influences like Nina Simone and Ella Fitzgerald but fuses it with a distinctively contemporary vibe with influences like Lauren Hill and Sade. She's got the look, she certainly has the talent and that extra special something that makes people sit up and take notice. Springs recently performed at the **Samueli Theater at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts** in Costa Mesa, California for a set of back-to-back performances which included classic jazz standards like "Gentle Rain" with a few surprises like the Stylistics' infectious '70s R&B hit "People Make the World Go Round" and Sade's "Pearls." Springs was backed by two extraordinary musicians in their own right, bass player Caylen Bryant and the show-stopping Taylor Moore on drums. Here are **7 reasons** to remember her name.

Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing

This sultry jazz singer is the real deal. She has mad piano skills, impeccable taste and is managed by the same team who discovered Rihanna. Springs is on the Blue Note Label, associated with some of the greatest jazz artists in history. You don't wind up on Blue Note unless you have the goods to back it up. She has a solid management team with Evan Rogers and Carl Sturken supporting and guiding her. Besides discovering Rihanna, this power duo has worked with everyone from Christina Aguilera to Kelly Clarkson and Shakira.



Kandace Springs blends jazz with contemporary influences.

She's Out and Proud

That's right. This southern girl from Nashville likes the ladies. She was raised in a very conservative and religious environment. She remembers always being attracted to girls, but in that climate, she was so sheltered she didn't even realize it [being a lesbian] was a thing. She dated guys growing up, because dating girls didn't feel like it was even on the menu. It wasn't until she moved to New York and was exposed to different people and different cultures that a friend encouraged her to explore the wonderful world of women. As Kandace explains, it's been 7 years since she switched teams and she hasn't looked back. Though she's happily coupled, Kandace dished about some of her celebrity crushes. The first name that rolled off her tongue was Michelle Rodriguez with no hesitation. But the list didn't end there. Kandace was quick to add that she doesn't have a specific type, rattling off a few other women who ignited her Sapphic desires

including Angelina Jolie, Zöe Kravitz and Lupita Nyong'o,

She Was Anointed by the Purple One

That's right, you heard me correct. His Purple Highness saw a video of Kandace performing a cover of the Sam Smith hit "Stay with Me" in 2014. Watch the video and you'll understand exactly what Prince saw about this super talented newcomer. Prince DM'd her on Twitter. Prince proved immensely supportive, flying her out to Minneapolis for recording sessions. They became fast friends, hanging out, playing checkers, riding bikes. Just normal folk, like you and me. Prince asked her to perform at the 30th anniversary of *Purple Rain* (two years before his death). Kandace cherishes her memories of time spent with the legend, hanging with him at his Paisley Park estate, laughing about his persistent efforts to transition out of the friend zone (despite their 30-year age difference). What's a lesbian to do when Prince starts coming on to you? Kandace kept him at bay and to his credit, it never crossed the line into #MeToo territory.

It's All About the Hair

It's the first thing you notice when she walks out on stage. It's not just a 'fro, it's a super 'fro. It's got all kinds of attitude, like the mane of a lioness. It probably should have its own Instagram page. This girl was blessed with a look and confidence that could've rocked the runway as deftly as she rocks the ivories. Kandace jokingly recalls the days from her childhood when her mom (who is white, while her father is black) struggled to run a comb through her and her sister's hair referring to the tangled mass as "nests."



Kandace Springs, jazz singer and automotive aficionado.

She's a Serious Car Junkie

When Kandace first told me she was into cars, I thought "oh, that's cute." Like maybe she zipped around town in a little mini-Cooper. She's not just a car enthusiast, she's a roll-up-your-sleeves and build the dang thing from scratch kinda girl. She even toyed with the notion of going to automotive school, but from the looks of her collection, she could've taught them a thing or two. If you have any doubt, check out her spread in the *Wall Street Journal*. Not only can she "sang" like nobody's business, but this soft-spoken southern gal has a bad-ass car collection that makes Jay Leno and Jerry Seinfeld look like grannies.

She's a Daddy's Girl

This isn't meant to take anything away from Springs' mother who had a significant impact on her career and influences. But it was her father, Scat Springs, a successful musician who worked with a slew of big name recording artists including Chaka Khan and Donna Summer who became her earliest mentor. Kandace fondly recalls the first upright piano he brought home when she was ten. They even recorded an album together before her career took off and he's been one of her biggest supporters. Though their early efforts were stalled by Nashville types who were "all talk and no action," her father never gave up, getting her demos into the hands of the right people. He instilled in his daughter the lesson that it only takes that one person who gets you and is prepared to go the distance. And that mindset eventually paid off.

Save the Date

Springs' 3rd studio album titled "The Women Who Raised Me" drops March 27th. As the title suggests, the record includes covers by recording artists she listened to growing up, jazz legends like Ella Fitzgerald, Dusty Springfield and Nina Simone as well as more contemporary artists like Diana Krall, Lauren Hill, Sade and Norah Jones, who is featured on the album in a duet with Ms. Springs.

featured photo: Mathieu Bitton

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