Beat: Music

Nicole Nighthawk focused on LA

Australias Sexiest Rockstar Exclusive

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USPA NEWS - As one of Australia´s most talented emerging singer-songwriters, Nicole Nighthawk oozes sensuality and emotionally sex appeal at every concert her thoughtful lyrics whether written from a place of heartbreak or a place of inspired hope captivate her audience within seconds. Her 'Stage Charisma' is second to none.
Touted by the music industry as the new “˜Queen of Aussie Rock´, Nighthawk recently wowed audiences with her powerful and emotive vocal performance in the “˜Whole Lotta Love´ Led Zeppelin celebration at theaters around Sydney (including the finale at the New South Wales State Theater). The show, now in its 16th year, showcases the best musicians and singers from around Australia in a tribute to classic rock legends Led Zeppelin. Opening the show with her rocking rendition of “˜Rock and Roll´, it was Nicole´s captivating performances of “˜Four Sticks´ and “˜Battle of Evermore´ (duet with Steve Balbi (Noiseworks)) which showcased the true versatility and power of her voice, and made her a crowd favorite.
USPA24 was fortunate to have an exclusive interview with this amazingly sultry and very sassy performer during her intermission of 'Whole Lotta Love'.

I asked Nighthawk to tell me about her life as a musician and singer. Wow how amazing is her story . "My first instrument was piano and I performed at the Sydney Opera House when I was a child , I never learnt how to read music - but I feel like that has increased my songwriting creativity because I´m not restricted by what I “˜should´ be doing as classically or technically trained musicians can be. I'm focused purely on the emotion and feeling when I write a song and let that freely flow through me."
Nighthawk passionately spoke of her early days at school and how the 'Mean Girl' mentality of other students increased her desire to succeed. "I sang Bohemian Rhapsody at my high school end of year performance. In year 12 in high school, I ran for school captain. For my speech, I wrote a song and performed it in front of the entire school at assembly. I was not the most popular kid, but that song won me the position of school captain! One of my tattoos has musical notes on it which are part of actual song that I wrote with the lyrics - “˜Let me go and build my wings, cause I have a plan to be something. I won´t stop for anything - gonna be somebody, be something," said Nighthawk.

I asked Nighthawk what inspired her lyrics and where she visions the future of the music industry?
"My song “˜All In Or Nothing´ was written about leaving my corporate job and making the commitment to music. It was a scary thing to walk away from a well paid six figure job into the unknown journey of a musical career - but I was committed to putting everything into my music and to do that I knew I needed time and flexibility more than I needed the money. I still believe in that. It is very hard to make money doing music and it is a lot of work being an independent artist. With the decrease in record sales over the past decade or so, it has made it even harder to make money in music the traditional way, so as artists we have to look for other streams for income like film soundtrack placement, product sponsorship, music in advertising or video games etc. Even so, I would take a creative lifestyle over a corporate one any day of the week! I´m not someone who likes to be part of the system. I go to bed at 3 - 4am most nights and get up at 11 or 12 - this doesn´t fit into the “˜system´ that has been created for us."

I asked Nighthawk, "what inspires you to write and create such diversity in your songs?"
"Songwriting is my therapy. It is the way I heal. I don´t write happy songs often - they are usually songs of heartbreak, internal conflict, or of disappointment and disillusionment with the world. Despite my often sad songs - I am actually a very happy and positive person! I think because through songwriting I am able to put words together that I can´t express any other way - it is like a direct line from my emotions. And once the song is written, I can let that emotion go," smiled Nighthawk.

When did your passion for music evolve?
"I was brought up in a musical household - my father is a jazz musician, so from the time I was born I was attending shows of him and his 3 brother´s jazz band. My parents played a lot of folk music and classic rock like Queen, so my love of music and classic rock developed young. I also had the opportunity to meet Michael Jackson and see some big concerts when I was a young child as my dad worked in the record business managing the Sydney chain of Brashes music stores. When I was taken to large concerts of famous artists and saw artists performing on the big stage, I knew I wanted to do the same - be up on the big stage performing like that".

Who inspired you to be the ultimate sexy rock chick?

"I wouldn´t call myself the ultimate sexy rock chick haha, but I´ve definitely been inspired by the boldness and flamboyance of artists like Freddie Mercury and Michael Jackson - both ultimate entertainers. Jimmi Hendrix, Led Zepplin´s Robert Plant, David Bowie and Michael Huchance of INXS were also performers who oozed charisma and influenced me. Interestingly, it has been generally male performers who have inspired me more than women due to the attitude they expressed when performing. When I was growing up, the female artists I was exposed to were more in the pop scene and I felt like it was less genuine and more artificial - where as the male "˜rock stars´ I saw seemed to live and breath that attitude. I feel like sex appeal is perhaps an attitude more than how much skin you show and all of those performers definitely had an air of flamboyant attitude and sex appeal.
I love fashion - and particularly anything out of the ordinary. I guess I have my own style to a degree, but I would think that MJ and Freddie Mercury probably also inspired my love of being different - I don´t like to follow the crowd in anything I do in life".

You rock band GRANDHOUR won the title of 'Australian Independent Rock artist of the year in 2016' Tell me a little bit about how this changed your life since 2016?

"After a long period of time working on that project with my then husband, and years of internal battles and turmoil, I came out as gay last year and ended my marriage with Jason - lead guitarist and producer in GRANDHOUR. Unfortunately this meant that the recording of our second album was put on hold and the band was ended. We may re-form in time, but matters of the heart take time to heal. Jason and I are still good friends and he has been a great support to me, but we were a very strong musical team and our break up has put a strain on that".

"The ending of my band, and having to start my life over again on my own is what prompted my move into a solo career. It is interesting that the strength I have gained through this difficult time, and finally feeling like I´m living my truth, has made me feel stronger in myself and as a singer and artist. Doing the Led Zeppelin Whole Lotta love shows has definitely challenged me and pushed me vocally into songs I would probably have never attempted. But over the course of rehearsals as I put my own meaning to the songs and related them to myself, they became songs I have grown to love - and I thoroughly enjoyed singing them. Through doing those songs which pushed my limits, I found a new power and style in my voice I didn´t know I had! The whole experience was amazing, and it was an honour to have the opportunity to perform with some of the country´s best musicians and vocalists".

Nighthawk is currently writing for her new solo project and about to record with Multi ARIA award winning Sound engineer Doug Brady who has had over 35 years of industry experience. Brady's credits make him one of Australia´s most prolific and successful music engineers with an impressive list of clients and artists which include some of the worlds most successful names in the entertainment industry.

Eddie Van Halen once said ..." It's funny, when bands or younger musicians ask me: 'So, what does it take to make it?' Well, first explain to me what you mean by 'making it': Do you want to be a rock star or do you want music to be your livelihood?"
What ever the long and winding road the life of a musician is an emotional roller coaster and the United States press Agency wish you well on your journey and thank you for this exclusive interview...Namaste.

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