

Me, myself and music!

What to say about Carla Virola? She's worse than one of the Jamaicans on the legendary skit-show, *In Living Color*, called "Hey Mon!" She does everything! And I mean this in a good way.

Carla Virola is a singer, dancer, actress and a dynamic pianist! You may have seen her at the Nuyorican Poets Café to Saturday Night Live to *As the World Turns*. Her resume is not to shabby; for one Latina born in East Harlem and at the age of eleven started to sing and play the piano; then later on in life attended the infamous "Fame" school.



Her new album entitled "Me" is an R&B Dance driven album. The whole premise of the title was all about her significant other at the time, Carla explains "Anything he wanted or needed I did to make him happy. It wasn't until a family crisis came up (my Father was diagnosed with Cancer) that I finally woke up, sent him packing and wrote this song, which became the foundation of my debut CD. It is a song of empowerment - meant to wake up the ladies who cater to their man's every whim. I realized, by forfeiting my feelings and thoughts and trying to be who he wanted me to be first, I got lost. Thus, the hook of the song - "it's all about me now!" Carla brings a up a great point; Latina musicians need to focus more music on self-empowerment, strength and realizing what's more important "US". "I think some of my songs are introspective and honest snapshots of what I was feeling, even though they were some very dark times, however, there is a positive message for Latinas to gain from my music - LOVE YOURSELF! Never put someone ahead of you - the Latin culture sometimes tends to breed this thought process - it's OK to be an individual, with your own thoughts & opinions, just remember to stand up for what you believe in, and don't let anyone - significant other or anyone, change how you feel or act, because they can't handle it. If they have to change who you are inherently, then it wasn't meant to be, walk away. Listen to the words in my songs and take strength, the song that comes to mind in particular is "Never Be", which drives this point home for me. Mixed in with the message songs, I also have a fun track "Timbalero" which is a celebration of the timbal - an instrument that always makes me smile, and describes a feeling that takes me back to the sounds of our people, the islands, in a dance beat, very contagious. So, though the overall feel of the CD is about female empowerment, I also throw in a few songs to celebrate our life! Rich with culture and sounds, we are happy people, that's for sure!" said Carla.

Some of Carla's musical inspirations are Stevie Wonder, Mariah Carey, Celia Cruz, El Gran Combo, Eddie Palmieri, Shakira, Celine Dion, Ricky Martin, Alicia Keys, India Arie, and her dad...of course. Even though her inspirations are more musical than theatrical; Carla enjoys both sides of the camera, whether it be acting or producing music for a show. Ya can't say she isn't www.carlav.com or feel free to email her personally at info@carlav.com and now for the two golden questions we just must know the answers to!

What is one mistake that you do not want anyone to recreate?
Make sure when you give your talents to anyone - a producer, manager, collaborator, you have ironed out the details beforehand in writing, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As a creative person, you tend to go with your heart, make sure you develop a thick skin, and most importantly business acumen, it's OK. I had a prior experience, which opened my eyes and helped me to educate myself and give me perspective on the business part of "Show Business". I wouldn't term it a mistake, but rather an awakening from an experience. Everything I learned from that experience, helped me launch my own record label and subsequently release my CD on my website.

Do you have any words of inspiration for Mijas that want to follow in your footsteps?

Believe in yourself, if you have a goal - go for it! When you get to the end of your life, you want to look back on the journey and say, sure I made mistakes and rode a rollercoaster, but I did everything I wanted to! Live your life to the fullest, as difficult as that can be sometimes, make those mistakes embrace them along with the good, they will make you who you will become in life, which is what it's all about.