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Katera, Making Noise Out of Columbia's Slim R&B Scene, Is Comfortable Where She Is

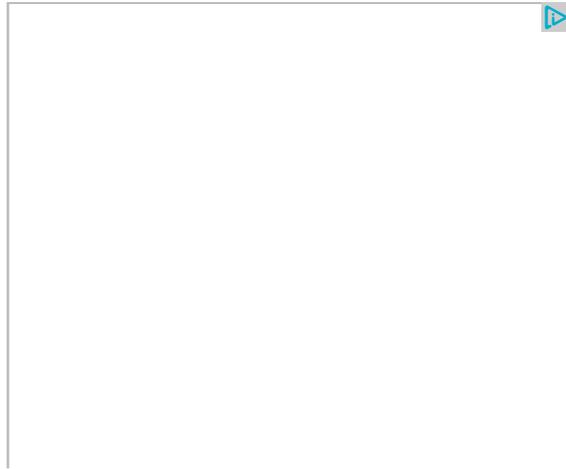
Saturday at Jubilee: Festival of Black History & Culture

Michael Spawn Sep 14, 2016

You may not have heard of her, but Columbia singer-songwriter Katera could be poised to make for herself in a local R&B scene that, compared to Columbia's rock and hip-hop enclaves, doesn't get much attention. When she takes the stage at Jubilee: Festival of Black History and Culture as the event's headliner, audiences will be treated to a blend of modern R&B and jazzy acoustic pop that fit just as well in a nightclub as a coffeehouse open mic — Lauryn Hill is a solid reference point, but Katera's perspective seems a good deal brighter.

What: Jubilee: Festival of Black History & Culture

Where: Mann-Simons Site, 1403 Richland St.



When: Saturday, Sept. 17, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

With: Katera, Rev. Matthew Mickens and the New Highway Travelers, Collette, Benedict Conce Akintunde (comedy)

Price: Free

More: 803-252-7742, historiccolumbia.com

Though undeniably slim, her recorded output shows immense promise. From the sultry, club-re Love With the DJ” to the lite-jazz “Super Hero” and “Hate Me Now,” she specializes in the slow r singles and lone acoustic jams as opposed to building to an album-drop event. That could chang year, when the singer, who coyly gives her age only as “forever 21,” plans to release her first full- album. She’s currently releasing a new mixtape called *Under the Influence* one song at a time vi:

Soundcloud, performing songs by artists who have had a profound impact on her, thus far cover Michael Jackson and Aaliyah.

Ahead of Jubilee, she sat down with *Free Times* to discuss how she's carved out a local niche.

Free Times: How did you get started performing and writing songs?

Katera: I started singing when I was really little. Growing up in church, I'd always been around and caught onto it really quickly, and I've been singing ever since. I started songwriting before I was teenager, but when I got to high school, that's when it started getting a little better and started taking some substance, and I've continued to write since then. A lot of my songs are based on life experiences. That helps a lot when it comes to the writing because you're just telling the truth.

Is releasing music a relatively new thing for you?

Well, I released the first single in 2012, and I've released the others since then. I'm currently doing a mixtape called *Under the Influence*. I'm releasing those one by one to keep my fans and everybody interested. With technology and everything now, people's attention spans are getting a little shorter, so I try to keep things coming out.

Let's talk a little bit about Jubilee. How does the event's celebration of African-American history and culture resonate with you personally?

Music plays a big role in African-American history and culture, but it brings people together no matter what culture or race or beliefs you have. Music is the one common thing that can reach all people.

As a black woman performing your style of R&B, have you experienced any difficulty creating for yourself in a city that doesn't necessarily have a lot of outlets for the genre?

It definitely hasn't been easy, but, you know, nothing good comes easy. And I don't really have anywhere else to compare Columbia to. I can't say that if I were in another city that things would be easier, this is where I'm from and I've been living here my whole life. But it is what it is and this is what I'm passionate about, so there's not much to do but work hard. I think Columbia's receptive to a lot of different genres, which is exciting for me. I like to think that I could play in any arena or any genre of music.



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