

Smooth Jazz Network · 1 day ago · 4 min read

Paula Atherton: Behind the Beats

Each week we'll take you 'Behind the Beats' to learn more about the artists that play on our airwaves. This week: Paula Atherton.

Paula Atherton is back with a quick follow-up to her chart dominating single "Keep It Coming", which went TOP 5 and spent 23 weeks on our SMOOTH JAZZ TOP 100 chart. The new single is titled "Ready or Not" and is looking to be one of the most added tracks so far this summer. We got a few minutes with the talented saxophonist, flutist and singer this past week.



Paula, Congratulations on the success of "Keep It Coming" and the new single "Ready Or Not". Tell us about the new single.

Hi Allen! Thanks so much for this feature!

My new single, "Ready or Not" was produced by Adam Hawley, and written by Adam and myself. Adam really did a lot on the track-he played guitar, rhodes, piano, strings, bells, and did programming. Carnell Harrell played additional synths, Mel Brown played bass, and Eric Valentine played drums. The horn section is myself, Michael Stever on trumpet, and Nick Lane on trombone. Michael takes a great trumpet solo on the track too! "Ready or Not" will be released July 18th.

And it was produced by Adam Hawley...

Yes, this is the first track I did with Adam, and I'm sure there will be more! Adam is great at what he does, he's very fast and getting everything done, and is super nice, so he is fun to work with too!



Your album "Can You Feel It" yielded 4 chart hits! Tell us more about the new project.

I can tell you that it's not done yet! But it is in the works, hopefully for release later this year. "Keep it Comin'" (written and produced by Jacob Webb) was the first single from my forthcoming release, and "Ready or Not" is the 2nd single. I'm working on a track with Greg Manning for this project, Curtis Harmon from Pieces of a Dream, and Bill Heller from the Rippingtons, among others. A few tracks I'll write and record in my studio, and Lou Gimenez will be the producer on those. Out of the other tracks I've recorded for the project so far, some of the musicians

include Lionel Cordew (drums-Spyrogyra), Roy DeJesus (bass), Cindy Bradley (trumpet, trombone), Emedin Rivera (percussion), Lou Gimenez (guitar)

You have worked with some of the smooth jazz genre's veteran artists and producers. Can you give us a few highlights?

Yes! I've been fortunate enough to work with (as I previously mentioned) Greg Manning- and that single, "Can You Feel it" was my 1st #1 on Billboard! Bill Heller (keys/Rippingtons) has produced tracks for me previously on "Shake it", and on "Can You Feel It" he produced "One Night in Madrid." I got to work with veteran producer Paul Brown on "Ain't No Denyin," Matt Godina on, "In the Pocket," and Schuyler Deale on "Funkulator" on "Can You Feel It" as well as tracks like "Low Rider" from "Shake it." I worked on a few tracks with Nick Colonne, writing and producing- "My Song for You" from "Shake it" has over 2.7 million streams on Spotify! Nick was a dear friend of mine, loved by all, I really miss him.

Who would you like to work with, but haven't yet?

Since I started working with outside producers, I really like where that has been taking me. I'm very happy and fortunate to have worked with the producers I have worked with so far- I'm always open to working with new people. I would love to work with Marcus Miller. I love some of the David Sanborn tunes he has written and recorded, he is uber talented! I would love to do a show with Sheila E, I think that would be really fun! I'd love to work with Dave Koz. I love working with Cindy Bradley, we have some shows coming up July 17 in Melbourne, FL at the King Center, and Aug. 21st at Glenora Winery. I love working with friends and really talented musicians!

How did you get started playing the sax?

I had started singing early in grade school, and got a flute when I was 9. I started studying jazz in my teens- I was singing Lester Young solos, Roy Eldridge solos, singing with Billie Holiday, playing Charlie Parker riffs in every key on my flute. I really felt like I needed more "colors"- more ways to express myself, so saxophone was the most logical way to go. I love being able to write for different instruments, and perform playing them and singing. I love the freedom of being a multi-instrumentalist!

When did you know you would be a professional musician and performing artist?

I never knew on what level I would be doing that- but I knew from the time I was a little kid that I really loved music, and wanted to be part of it somehow. Music kind of picks you, rather than you picking it- you don't have a choice! It's not necessarily an easy life, but I wouldn't trade it for anything!

Any words of advice for young people who might have interest in pursuing a musical career?

If that's what's in their heart, go for it! Be disciplined, work on your craft. Find your own voice whether playing or singing- you have your own sound! Everyone is unique and if you just stay on your path, and work very hard, you can achieve anything!

You are pretty active on social media. How does your usage of social media impact your career as an artist?

It keeps us as artists in touch with friends and fans, and let's them know what's happening. We use the platforms to help promote shows, and that is necessary. Being a touring musician you wind up meeting a lot of people, and it allows you to quickly touch base and say hello.

Keep up with Paula Atherton and find links to her social media accounts [here](#).



Behind the Beats

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