

Introducing...

MARZETTE GRIFFITH

No account of Chicago's soul scene is complete without highlighting the remarkable contributions of Marzette Griffith. Renowned as a consummate performer in music and dance, Griffith's acclaimed career includes solo artistry and dynamic work with his former recording group, Essence. As the charismatic lead vocalist, he propelled two of Essence's singles—"Sweet Fools" and "I Ain't Much But I'm All I Got"—onto the prestigious Billboard Top 100 charts. Released by Epic Records' Cleveland International, these timeless R&B tracks were masterfully produced by Chicago legend Willie Henderson, Frank Rand, and Grammy winner Jim Peterik, famed for hits like "Vehicle" and "Eye of the Tiger." An enduring friendship and musical partnership with Peterik is marked by collaborations that include songwriting, performing, producing, and arranging. Another longtime friend and musical collaborator is Grammy nominee Paul Richmond, the iconic songwriter of The Manhattan's classic "Shining Star."

Marzette Griffith's sound captivates audiences worldwide via international radio airplay, streaming, and live concert performances. He has shared the stage with fellow entertainers such as Ray, Goodman & Brown; The O'Jays; Earth, Wind & Fire; The Temptations; The Whispers; The Chi-Lites; The Dramatics; The Stylistics; Angela Winbush; Midnight Star; Gladys Knight; The Emotions; James Brown; Syleena Johnson; After 7; Heatwave; Will Downing; Phil Perry; Ramsey Lewis; K-Ci & JoJo; Kem; Keith Sweat; Harold Melvin's Blue Notes; R. Kelly; Steve Cropper; Mindi Abair; Casey Abrams; Lisa McClowry; Steve Oliver; Si Jay; and many others. Additionally, he toured globally as a background vocalist for the legendary Bobby Womack. He also lent his vocals and Fred Astaire-inspired dance flair to a revival of the Ides of March's hit "Vehicle," which he performed alongside Jim Peterik for World Stage Productions. Griffith's impressive vocal range has resonated across various entertainment platforms. These include performances on Chicago's V-103 radio station, The Black Women's Expo, WGN Channel 9 News, ABC's nationally syndicated Windy City Live, exclusive cruise ship shows, and more. From 2014 to 2018, he served as one of the lead singers of The Chi-Lites. Today, he thrives as both a solo artist and a member of The Notations.



Throughout his career, Griffith has earned numerous awards and heartfelt recognitions. He was honored with a nomination for the Black Excellence Award by the African-American Arts Alliance of Chicago. He has also received distinguished accolades, including the NAACP Sammy Davis Jr. Award, the Word of Mouth Entertainment Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Chicago Steppin' Guide Magazine Award. His profound influence on the steppin' community is celebrated with Certificates of Achievement from Florida Steppers International and the Majestic Gents. Other distinctions include the 2016 Juneteenth Freedom Day Impact Award and the "We Live in Color" Humanitarian Award. In 2019, Cook County Board of Commissioners President Toni Preckwinkle officially declared August 30 as Marzette Griffith Day. This special proclamation was issued on behalf of the City of Chicago and Cook County, Illinois. It honors Griffith's enduring legacy as a beloved recording and performing artist in the music entertainment industry. Moreover, it expresses deep appreciation for his inspiring impact on communities in the United States and abroad.

A pioneering force in Chicago's historic Steppin' community, Marzette Griffith's smooth dance style won him the first World's Largest Steppers' Contest—a title he reclaimed after a two-year hiatus. He is also the creative force behind many popular songs that energize dance floors, including "Nobody By That Name," "Nothing But a Party," "Promise Me Your Love," "Rhythm on Time," and "Groove Spot." He even made a cameo appearance steppin' in the romantic comedy-drama Love Jones, starring Nia Long and Larenz Tate. In every respect, Griffith embodies the essence of a versatile, gifted artist. He is known for his commanding stage presence, elegance, and a musical catalog that effortlessly spans R&B, soul, jazz, blues, pop, and inspirational genres. What truly distinguishes him, however, is his unwavering commitment to uplifting others. His passion for encouraging aspiring vocalists shines through his weekly mentorship. This dedication exemplifies his "each one, teach one" philosophy. His focus on paying it forward, combined with his music, has earned him a reputation as one of Chicago's hardest-working individuals.

