

## **Bio 2021**

Toni Soleil's music is full of wisdom that belies her youth. She's 19 years old, and already she's been crafting passionate, soulful R&B imbued with emotional depth for years. Even early songs like her viral 2016 single, "FEELINGZ," felt strikingly mature when, over a track that felt equally '90s, neo-soul, and new, she smokily sang, *"I thought I could trust you, but I was a damn fool."* That cut oozed realness and others felt it too, to the tune of nearly 3 million YouTube views, 3 million Spotify streams, and over 2 million SoundCloud streams to date. Meanwhile, the Miami artist's new music readily shows how much she's deepening her knack for intimate, immediate storytelling. Few fresh-faced songwriters bring as much weight to stories of love lost and found.

Take the cleverly searing chorus of single "Cheated," featuring Luh Kel: *"I'm so damn glad that I cheated on you/I did the shit you do — I pulled a you on you/Don't be mad because you taught me how to move."* It's an unapologetic, fully 2021 answer to TLC's "Creep," the kind of song you could see dominating social media timelines, peppered in the captions of thirst traps. As Toni put it, "I want to create a storyline that will make Instagram go crazy. I feel like my personality really comes out in my songwriting. I'm very transparent. My fans are gonna see everything."

In a way, it makes sense that Toni is so self-possessed—she's basically been performing her whole life. Born in Miami to a Caribbean family, she learned to sing along, at 6, to the reggae songs she grew up hearing around the house. She started writing songs at 14, and earned the name Soleil (which means "sun" in French) from her mother for the warmth and light her voice brought into their home. She was the youngest of eight children, and she was quickly motivated to turn her love for music into something that could help provide for her parents and siblings.

Toni's mother was encouraging. She hoped her daughter would stick with reggae, but soon saw that the girl was finding her own path. Toni found what she needed in R&B, a style allows for the thorough exploration of relationships, healthy or toxic. Today, her ability to weave fully realized tales of heartbreak in particular stands out. "I want to be able to sing what everybody's thinking, what girls go through," Toni says, citing an analog to her edgy yet relatable writing style. "Kind of like how rap girls want to express themselves for women, I feel like I can bring that to the table."

She was so eager to write at a young age, that she drew inspiration from wherever she could, honing her pen by telling her own stories as much as those shared with her by her confidantes. "I wasn't even doing half of what I was singing about—those were my friends' experiences," Toni says with a laugh. Of course, as she's grown up, that ratio has shifted in tandem with her growth

on the piano and in music composition. “I've never been more comfortable with myself and my sound than I am now. I feel like now I've developed as an artist. I've developed as a person.”

In fact, much of that personal development has happened through the music. As Toni explains, some of her songs come to fruition because she can't find the right words for a situation in the moment. Through the songwriting process, she's able to process, which is part of why her music feels so authentic. “Sometimes I can't communicate how I feel. I just say it better in music,” she admits. As she commits words to page, “it winds up in the song because I have to get it out.”

But make no mistake: While she's fully in tune with her emotions, Toni isn't soft when it comes to her legacy. She's looking beyond music, envisioning a future of flexing that will set her apart from her peers. “I'm not trying to be no regular R&B singer,” she says. “You're probably gonna think I'm a rapper when I come in the game, just by my drip, my swag. I want to set trends.”

That ambition shows that, despite her mature perspective, Toni is still a striver and a dreamer. She plans to be on billboards. She knows her name will ring out in the industry. She wants an army of supporters. And even as she's focused on molding a new sound in R&B, she's aiming not just for the pop charts but far, *far* beyond any kind of metrics. “I want to make classics, and to be remembered—period,” says Toni Soleil. “Every generation is gonna bump my stuff.”