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AUGUST ISSUE

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**Coco Jones
plays
through
shifting
models
from
acting
to
singing**



**R&B
songstress
Coco Jones
continues
to propel
her new
single
"Caliber"
to new
heights**

Raised in Lebanon, Tennessee, a small town near Nashville, to former NFL player Mike Jones and session vocalist Javonda Jones. Coco Jones began singing at a very young age. Her first stage performance was at the age of six when she performed "America the Beautiful" to a crowded auditorium of parents at her kindergarten graduation. At the age of nine, she met with the casting heads for Disney. After that, she became an actor and songwriter. In 2006, she competed on Radio Disney, where she became known for her song "Real You"

In 2009, she was chosen to perform live on "The Most Talented Kids" episode of the Maury Povich Show. In 2010, Coco Jones was the runner up during season 3 of Radio Disney's "The Next Big Thing" singing competition. In 2011, she guest-starred on Disney Channel's television series "So Random!". Shortly after, she released her debut project Coco Jones, and began a concert tour revolving around the theme of anti-bullying called UBU-Stop the Bullying.

Coco Jones signed a record deal with Hollywood Records and began working with Grammy-nominated producer Rob Galbraith, co-writing and recording all-new original music. Coco Jones' debut single "Holla at the DJ" premiered on Radio Disney on December 6, 2012, with its release on iTunes the next day. The video for the track premiered on the Disney Channel on December 12, with a premiere on VEVO just afterwards. Her extended play "Made Of" was released on March 12, 2013, and toured with Mindless Behavior later that year. Coco Jones performed with Mindless Behavior at Radio Disney's Radio Disney Music Awards, and took home an award for "Funniest Celebrity Take." Following the release of the EP, Coco Jones worked in the studio with David Banner, Ester Dean, and Jukebox, with plans to release her debut album by August.

In January 2014, Coco Jones was dropped from Hollywood Records, becoming an independent artist. On August 29, 2014, Jones released a lyric video for her debut independent single, "Peppermint".

Coco Jones was featured in a Fanta commercial in July 2017 alongside YouTubers and other public personnel who value the idea of self expression, in September of that year she released a song called "Just My Luck" along with its music video. On September 20, 2019, she released an 8-track EP titled "H.D.W.Y."

In August 2020, it was announced Coco Jones will appear in the upcoming holiday film White Elephant and horror film "Vampires vs. the Bronx."

At just 24 years old, actress and musician Coco Jones is already making an impact in her respective industry. It has been apparent that for some time now major shifts in the entertainment industry need to be made, and Coco is not afraid to step up and be the catalyst. We've all seen her in the Disney hey-day, and she's reflected a bit about her experiences as a child star but, she's shining in a new and brighter light. Coco has served as one of our top role models growing up and she hasn't stopped showing us how to be our authentic selves.



The recent release of "Caliber" follows her highly lauded role as the new Hilary Banks, cousin of Will Smith in *Bel-Air*, Peacock's *Fresh Prince* reimagining, which premiered February 13. "Caliber" is the first advance track from Coco's forthcoming debut EP, set for release later this year.

For those who were not introduced to the 24-year-old talent through her Disney career, which began in 2010, watching Coco Jones shine on *Bel-Air* may come as a shock. For fans who've followed her journey, though, it is no surprise that Coco Jones is thriving. As she enters a new era of her career, Jones is leaving no gift unwrapped. Beyond acting, Coco Jones is ready to restart her music career, and in this new stage of life, she's ready for more.

This interview had been edited for length and clarity by *vibe* magazine.

Do you think that you're entering what could be considered the prime of your career?

Coco Jones: That is... I'm literally reminding myself in my mind to write this down, to journal this question because that is so deep. In one sense, I don't feel like I'll know that that was my prime until I look back like, "That was my prime." But in my mind I feel like I have so much more to give, so much more to do. I see myself in blockbusters. I see myself being the first "something" role in my mind. I see myself doing a world tour.

I'm going to have to say no, I don't think this is my prime. I think this is my renaissance moment. I think this is me pressing the gas. The car is about to go super fast but for some reason, the gas was locked. But now it's finally pressed down. That's how I feel.

Do you feel pressured to present yourself in any certain way? Is there any of that in your mind when you create?

Sometimes I do get apprehensive thinking that I'm not raunchy enough to keep up with what sells, but I always remind myself that talent started off selling at first and talent will continue to be what sells. If I have to give a gimmick, then the song is not good enough for me. If I have to put all these words in it to catch people's attention.

Do you think that “Caliber” sets the appropriate tone for everything else that you have coming? What other themes or topics are going to be explored by you musically?

I think “Caliber” has a lot of the key ingredients that are going to make up my album. The vibe makes you want to dance and there will be some full choreography, some five, six, sevens, and some eights, okay! Towards the end of the song, I’m doing some more vocal acrobatics because I want people to know that I be singing! I can sing. And my album will, of course, give some even bigger singing moments as well. But really that balance to me of classy, sexy, grown, and authentic. I do feel like “Caliber” has all of those elements and that will be the theme of my album whenever it comes.

Who are some of the people who have inspired you musically?

Well, growing up I listened to a lot of powerhouse singers, Aretha [Franklin], CeCe Winans, Mariah [Carey], Jennifer Hudson, Whitney [Houston]. Of course, I learned those bigger notes and that passion from them. As I got older, PartyNextDoor, SZA, Summer Walker. I love Alex Isley. Masego is dope... I like the way their songs feel. I want to make my songs feel the way that I feel when I listen to them.

On that note, how do you want people to feel when they listen to “Caliber?”

I hope that they love the lyrics. I hope that they get some IG captions up out of it. And I hope they want to hit a five, six, seven, and eight, because, in the music video, it’s going to give that. And I’m going to need all the girls to make a little TikTok with a dance routine and also remember the choreo.

Meet the Cast of Bel-Air

“Coco Jones on Playing Hilary Banks” by Niki Cruz

All eyes were on **Bel-Air** when Peacock teased the dramatic reboot of **The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air** this past December. The new series was introduced as a gritty recalibration of the 90s sitcom, a tall order considering its predecessor has been cemented in pop culture for decades.

Much like the original, **Bel-Air** sees **Will Smith** (**Jabari Banks**) embarking on a new life in **Bel-Air** after getting in trouble in the streets of **West Philly**. Viewers experience a drama modernized for our times as the series explores **Will** confronting his roots and navigating classism through his experiences with the **Banks** family.



Jabari Banks
as Will



Adrian Holmes
as Phillip Banks



Cassandra Freeman
as Vivian Banks



Olly Sholotan
as Carlton Banks



Coco Jones
as Hilary Banks



Akira Akbar
as Ashley Banks



Jimmy Akingbola
as Geoffrey



Jordan L. Jones
as Jazz



Simone Joy Jones
as Lisa

Meet the Cast of *Bel-Air*

“Coco Jones on Playing Hilary Banks” by Nicki Cruz

Breathing new life into a classic is a big gamble, but it paid off and has turned into Peacock’s most-streamed series. “We know we’re standing on the shoulders of giants, but with that, we’ve been able to blaze a path of our own, which is beautiful,” said Jabari Banks.

Banks added, “When I read the script, I thought, ‘Oh, this has something to say!’

The show gives each character its own journey to explore through familiar archetypes. “I was apprehensive concerning my culture and if they were going to accept something new,” said actress Coco Jones, who plays Hilary Banks.

The essential part of *Bel-Air* working is seeing how the different personalities click and bounce off of each other, just as they did decades ago. Each character had to feel unique and believable as a unit, cited Banks.

“[Writer and Director] Morgan [Cooper] always says, if we’re going to tell a story about a family, we’re going to have to build a family,” stated Banks. “It was important to not only cast people who fit the archetype of who this character is, but cast genuine people who would be beautiful to work with.”

Meet the Cast of Bel-Air

“Coco Jones on Playing Hilary Banks” by Nicki Cruz

One of the most dynamic discoveries is how writers updated Will's once hilarious and ditzy older cousin (once played by Karyn Parsons), now turned social media influencer and chef. While Hilary (Coco Jones) still has the most fashionable looks on TV, her character has substance.

“I think the most exciting part for me is getting to represent Hilary as more goal-oriented,” said Jones. “She's more of a hustler. She really has a vision of what her life is going to be like, and she refuses to put herself in a box.” Jones continued, “I was excited to present a different dynamic to her that's more headstrong and a role model.”

Each character's perspective feels authentic and relevant to our times, whether Hilary is putting her roots into her social media content, Will dealing with classism, or Carlton's struggle with his Blackness. That authenticity is something writers lead with when exploring the storylines.

“We wanted to lean into the authenticity of what it looks like when a young Black man gets in trouble, and he has to move across the country to a whole new lifestyle?” said Banks. The writers delve deeper into issues the original skimmed the surface on. “There's issues dealing with PTSD, mental health, status, and class. It was dope that we got to touch on these topics. It's important not only for us as a culture but for us as a world to see this coming of age story.”

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Coco Jones

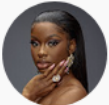
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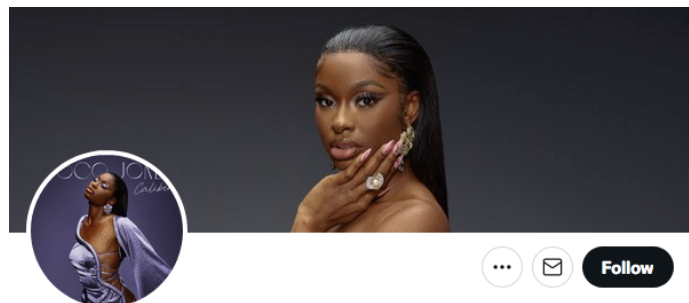
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Coco Jones

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