

STOP
Look Listen.

GOAPELE

Qua-Puh-Lay

Here's something rare: an R&B songstress coming out of California's underground hip-hop scene. What isn't much

of a surprise is how Goapele's upbringing and involvement with this generally socially conscious scene has led her to create music that is bursting with intelligence and individualism. Goapele (which translates to "to move forward" in Siswana, a South African dialect) was born and raised in Oakland, after her mother married South African political exile Douglas Mhlabane while she was studying in Nairobi, Kenya. Her parents made sure their daughter would be the type of person who'd combat the world's many social ills.

During her teenage years, Goapele was balancing school and music with activism and community projects. She was involved with pre-teen peer support groups and organizations out to put an end to racism and sexism. She sang with the Oakland Youth Choir and had a short stint with the group Vocal Motion before heading to college to study music theory at the Berkley School of Music in Boston. By 2002 she had recorded her debut, *Even Closer* which featured California underground staples Casual, Pap Love and Zion I. Now Goapele is ready to drop her sophomore effort, *Change It All*, further expanding her sound, which borrows from artists ranging from Nina Simone and Billy Holiday to Aretha Franklin and Prince. She's keepin' it Bay Area for a second time around, inviting some of her old friends onboard, along with a couple of new faces. "I feel like culturally, it's rich out here in the Bay area," boasts the proud Californian. "We don't have to just write love songs, we can talk about what's going on and audiences are open to that. There's a community here." **BB**