

At one point, being a neo-soul artist was all the rage. Tired of the hip-hop inspired music that is radio R&B, a few artists became pioneers by essentially not being pioneers at all. Instead of the catchy hooks, paint-by-numbers lyrics and club ready beats that R&B was serving up, neo-soul artists took it back to the bare essentials: a live band and a singer with tons of soul to share. Having finally realized that there's nothing "neo" about this music (it is and always will be "soul" after all), many artists started to distance themselves from that scene. Jaguar Wright has proved with her latest release that she's also ready to *Divorce Neo 2 Marry Soul*.

Along with the likes of Jill Scott and Musiq Soulchild, Wright is part of a growing list of artists proving that Philadelphia hasn't lost its touch when it comes to producing amazing soul singers. Though she grew up in a household that forbade secular music, young Jag made sure she got her fill of Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye. She started rapping in a group named Philly Blunts and before long was doing backup vocal work for acts along the east coast. The Roots loved her so much that they put her on their okayplayer tour, and would later use her as a backup singer during their *Jay-Z Unplugged* performance on MTV. In 2002 she dropped her debut album, *Denial, Delusions & Decisions* with the help of The Roots. Now it's 2005 and while she's still got love for those who helped her along the way, she's still divorcing neo and living her life as a woman happily married to soul. *Divorcing Neo 2 Marry Soul* found Jag continuing her career without the big-name push of The Roots, but maintaining a sound as soulful as ever. For fans of soul music, this is one divorce to be happy about! —A.O.C.

STOP
Look. Listen.

JAGUAR
Happily Married to Soul
WRIGHT