

## Shantel's Biography

Shantel is a singer/songwriter/recording artist with over two decades of experience having worked with the incomparable Jean Carne, Dexter Wansel, Instant Funk, Howard Hewitt, and the late Bunny Sigler. Her album, *Arize: It's Time to Shine*, recorded at Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff's Philadelphia International Studios, was released through Universal Records.

She has graced many stages, most notably the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York; The Celebrity Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona; and Saint Lucia Jazz Festival in Castries, Saint Lucia. With a vast musical repertoire which includes rhythm and blues, gospel, reggae, musical theatre, pop and jazz, Shantel's vocal range and style paints a soulfully authentic picture with each of her performances. She began her music career as a backup vocalist for Coffee, a cover band in Arizona. As one of the featured vocalists, she led the band while applying her authentic melodic style to the R&B and jazz music she performed. A fellow musician recognized her talent and encouraged her to pursue a career as a professional singing artist and put her in contact with Raymond Earl, famed Instant Funk bassist and producer. Shantel and Earl immediately recognized they were kindred spirits and partnered to create an album which showcased their unique ability to create classic music featuring mindful lyrical storytelling and organic musicianship.

As an English teacher for over a decade, Shantel has engaged and inspired many aha moments while teaching literature and composition. She's noted saying that her favorite part of being a teacher is her ability to form lasting relationships with students and be a model of what one would like to see in the world. Her two favorite teaching texts are Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Shantel said, "Hawthorne's take on how a character can become ostracized and continue to persevere outside the confines of the societal structure is fascinating." Shantel was also deeply moved with Morrison's protagonist, Nacola, whom she believes is a tragic character because she lived existentially, never having the ability to seek internal guidance---Pacola's story saddened Shantel so deeply, she couldn't help but cry while reading Morrison's prose with her American Literature course students. Shantel is indeed a reading advocate, committed to sharing her love of literature and the importance of reading as a vehicle for elevating the mind and unifying the human race.

As a master teacher and lyricist, Shantel has discovered a unique form of sharing her artistry. She is able to combine her love of singing, teaching and learning by presenting her audiences with knowledgeably interactive entertainment. While fans admire her uniquely smooth range and rhythmic lyrical style, they continue to be intrigued with her energy, positivity, personability and pedagogical approach through song. Some may say that if they envisioned an all-star tribe of singers, Shantel may be in the Erica Badu, Rashaan Patterson, Nancy Wilson, Jill Scott, Minnie Riperton, Alicia Keys, Raphael Saadiq tribe. However, when you witness her performances and listen to her musical compositions, it is clear that she is authentically in a tribe of her own; however--known for being humble--she emphasized how honored she would be to exist in a tribe with all artists she admires.

She is currently one of the lead vocalists of The Straight-Ahead Big Band, a twenty-plus piece musical ensemble. She is also a featured artist for the Delaware Valley Wind Ensemble.

Shantel holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Temple University where she graduated Cum Laude and earned her Master of Education from Saint Joseph's University. She continues to share her musical and literary passion with audiences and with her students at George School—an international day and boarding high school—located in Newtown, Pennsylvania.