



free spirit

Cliche

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Growing up in the flashy splendor of Las Vegas and influenced by the city's fun, party vibe, Manika is ready to take the music world by storm. Manika is not your average pop princess; she is a free spirit and an artist to be reckoned with as she blends various elements and genres into her music. Commanding the stage with an arresting, fiery presence, Manika is crazy talented and the last protégé of the acclaimed Frank DiLeo and Michael Jackson. Between a dazzling appearance at the 2016 Grammy Awards, hosting Global Beauty Masters on TLC, giving love advice on *Manika's Love Line* at Dash Radio, and launching a new column in Hype Magazine also called *Manika's Love Line*, you surely have been missing out on all of the fun if you haven't heard of Manika. Here, we chat with Manika about her chart-topping singles and her future plans. **BY MECCA-AMIRAH JACKSON / PHOTOGRAPHED BY VIKTORIJA PASHUTA**

Cliché: Tell us a little about yourself. What sets you apart from other rising artists?

Manika: I was born and raised in Las Vegas. I feel like not many artists are from here. I am a free spirit; I do not like to stick to just pop. I do not limit myself in my music genres because I feel like it limits my creativity. Sometimes I will do pop-rap, pop-dance, and pop-ballad; I like to mix things up. That also goes along with my tastes in music. I like all types: from pop, Top 40, rap, and dance to even Broadway and classical.

You have mentioned your mixed heritage. Do you think you are making a pathway for other Asian and Latina artists?

My mixed heritage definitely influences my music. I have Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, European, and Malaysian roots, so I wanted to incorporate their different experiences in my music. I think it will lead the way for other Asian and Latina artists. Megan Lee came into Dash Radio, a Korean artist who is

from Nickelodeon's *Make It Pop*, and it was cool to see her singing in English and not just K-Pop. I hope in the future we will see more Asian artists singing in English, too, or even mixing it up with multiple languages with English in the same song.

For your single "I Might Go Lesbian," you add hip-hop, urban elements to your music. If you could work with any rapper, dead or alive, who would it be?

Actually, Tyga is one of my favorite rappers. I was excited to work with him and have been a fan since "Rack City." I added some rock elements to the song as well since I like to play around with sounds. My other favorites are Eminem and definitely Nicki Minaj.

Tell us about hosting the Global Beauty Masters on TLC. The projects the students worked on looked spectacular.

There was such amazing fashion, but it was not limited to just fashion; there were also hair, nails, makeup, and wardrobe. The students were from all around the world and it was amazing to see how they were so hungry and eager to learn. They learned so fast and were daring and out-of-the-ordinary. It was also great because the students were also receiving mentorships. Most of the students are around the same age of my fans (and some were actually fans), so it was fun interacting with them through my music, too.

Your sheer, crystal dress at the Grammys was stunning! Who is your fashion inspiration or idol?

When it comes to fashion, I am all over the place. I view it as a way to express yourself and wear whatever makes you feel most beautiful. Some days I will feel like wearing a pretty pink dress. Then there are days where I will just be wearing jeans, and then there

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are days like the Grammys where I want to feel really sexy and wear that sheer, crystal dress. The dress I wore at the Grammys was inspired from Las Vegas, like the showgirls with a futuristic twist. Growing up, I

loved Madonna and Lady Gaga's bold, daring fashion; they were doing things no one else was doing at their times.

The music video for "How Can I Love" is so powerful and heartbreaking. For those who have not seen it, what is the message behind it?

My fans love this song because it strikes a chord in their hearts. They are able to relate to it because, like so many people out there, many of them at one time or another have felt depressed, alone, self-conscious, or like no one understands them. Sometimes people try to hide what they are going through and they are hurting inside as they try to discover themselves. So many people can relate to that, even myself. I originally did not think of incorporating personal stories, but then I messaged 1,000 fans at random and asked them to send in videos. The videos were heartbreaking; they just want to not feel like weirdos, but normal. If they only knew that most people on earth are weirdos just like me and them. I think this video helps spread that awareness. You are not alone in your struggles!

You have an impressive biography. You were the protégé of the acclaimed Frank DiLeo and Michael Jackson, in 2012 you toured with One Direction across North America as an opening act, and you have several outstanding performance awards under your belt. So, what is next?

Definitely more music coming soon. I plan to return to Global Beauty Masters next season, so stay tuned on my website ManikaOfficial.com and social media @ManikaOfficial, and also on Dash Radio where I will bringing out celebrity guests and giving out love advice. I am on Sunday at 6pm PST/9pm EST. *Manika's Love Line!*

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