

# female fyi

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## FEATURE

LIVING LARGE  
TRANSFORM YOUR  
SMALL SPACE

## TRAVEL

JAMAICA

## FOOD

ORANGE HILL  
RESTAURANT

## POWER UP

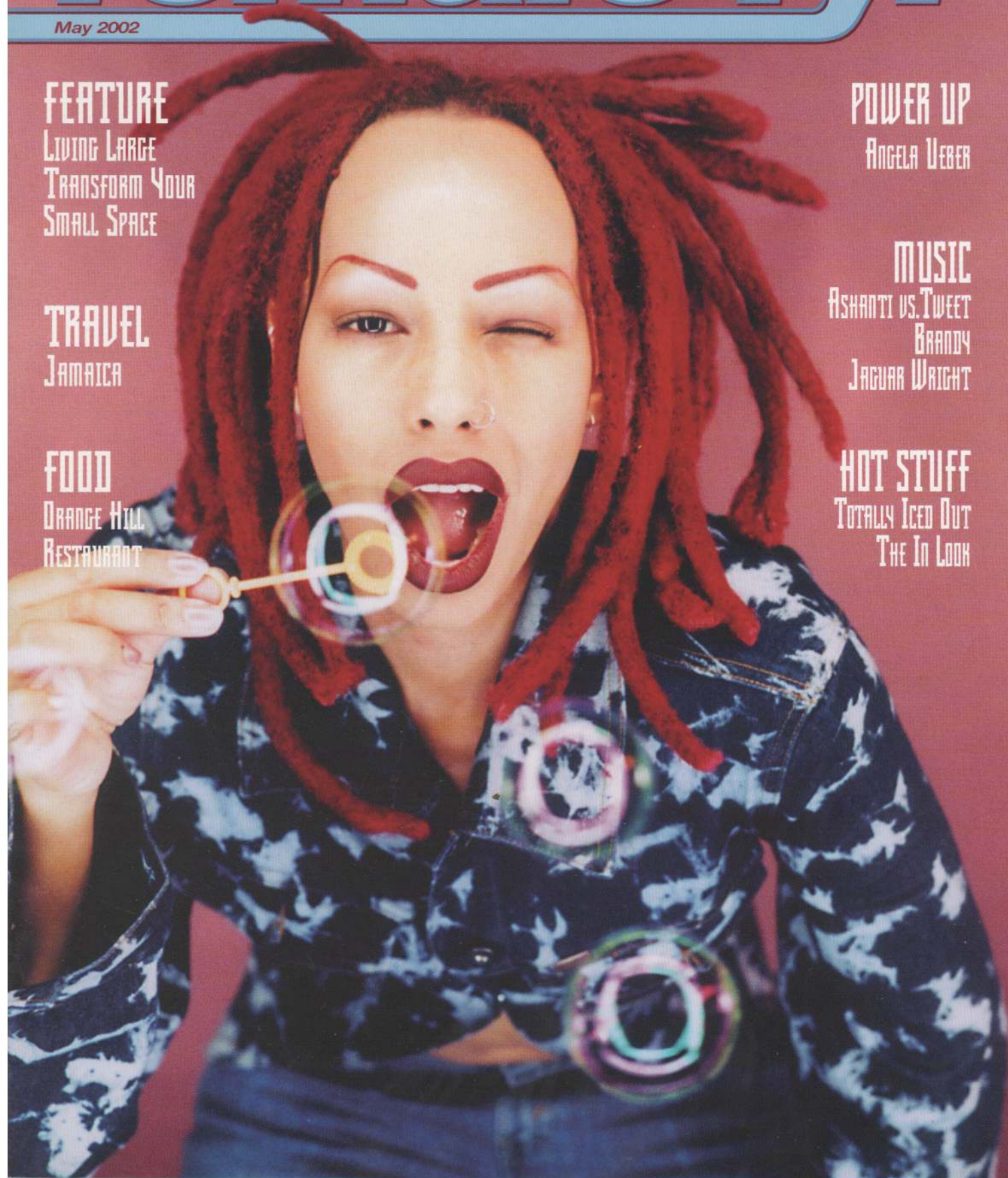
ANGELA WEBER

## MUSIC

ASHANTI VS. TWEET  
BRANDY  
JAGUAR WRIGHT

## HOT STUFF

TOTALLY ICED OUT  
THE IN LOOK



By Candace Moore



**5** '12" IS HOW SONGSTRESS ANGELA UEBER JOKINGLY DESCRIBES HER HEIGHT. BUNDLED IN A FAKE-FUR VINTAGE COAT, GORGEOUS, WITH LONG, BLUE-AND-BLACK STREAKED LOCKS, THE SOLO-ARTIST IS A TALL FORCE-OF-COOL TO BE RECKONED WITH ON MY DOORSTEP. Content to

sip cheap Reibenbach pilsners in a teensy, dimly-lit Silverlake studio, the former front-woman for the Indiana, alternative four-piece Rushmore Whig is the definition of down-to-earth. There's a comforting twang of the mid-west in her deep voice as she modestly downplays everything from tallness, to her explosive success as a vocalist with little formal training, to her latest breakout solo venture.

Self-titled, Ueber's six song collection reminds you of PJ Harvey's rough and tumble vocals (she can hit those soul-scathing lows) with a backdrop of somewhat-ironic pop. Feel-good guitar, mixed sounds and drums play straight comics to the self-affacing, troubled lyrics about love and loss. When asked to describe her music (a rude question to any indie-card carrying member) Ueber flounders: "One song, Instead, is mellow, low-key, it's more of an acoustic-sounding thing, others just kinda rock out, and some I do more funky/bluesy. It's all different."

Although comparison is not what the artist demands- her voice is an exclusive - Ueber sites her influences as including: the Pretenders, Ani DiFranco, Bjork, Poe, Liz Phair and Sonic Youth. Her main man, and the impetus to young Ueber belting out tunes in the shower, or signing up for high school show choir, was the King himself. Ueber explains: "My parents were older and so I was brought up on Herb Albert, Nat King Cole and Perry Como, and my brothers and sisters were pretty much out of the house, so I just inherited whatever leftover 45's of ABBA they had. But it started with Elvis

Presley for some reason. I got hooked." The imprint of Elvis is readable in Ueber, in the sweetened babbling of her articulations, a smoothed-over confidence and kinetic energy. There's a sense she needs to get up and run about the room.

Angela Ueber confronted a hoop before a microphone, as a scoring basketball player with the Indiana Tech Lady Warriors. Loving college basketball, but equipped with a libra's indecisiveness, the young woman went through multiple majors at her university before finding her life's calling. She got her feet wet in Education, Tele-Communications, Engineering, and specializing in Dental Hygiene before she "fell into a band unexpectedly." Still in Fort Wayne, Indiana, never having strayed from her hometown, it was Ueber's roommate who unknowingly discovered and encouraged the soulful singer, by suggesting to a drummer in Ueber's high school graduation class, Charley Shirmeyer, who was putting a band together, that Angela 'sang good around the house'.

When, as a fluke, Ueber tried out for the then-unnamed, all-guy band during the Halloween of 1995 with an R.E.M. cover song, she had no sense of the trajectory that the newly-founded group would take her on. "I knew a few chords but I had some fifteen dollar garage sale guitar that wasn't even real and it had this odd-looking speaker on it." Ueber smirks, "I brought it to practice and the guitar guy, Luke, sighed 'Okay. We'll have to get you a guitar.' It was a toy basically... but a really good looking guitar toy."

The fledgling progressive-rock group lucked out by landing their first gig at one of the best venues in Fort Wayne. "It's a small bar but it can hold around 900-1000 people.



“I love good people, and there are so many people in my life that I'm blessed to have as close friends, and I love them how they are.”

I thought 'Cool. This is fun. I'm just playing for this one show,' but then the place was totally packed from early (like 8:30) in the night on. Wall-to-wall people. After the show they wanted to book us again and again and it was a spiral effect- we were huge- we were huge to begin with, and ended up going through a booking agent that booked us all around, throughout surrounding states.”

Made for the stage, Ueber lead Rushmore Whig to local acclaim, garnering radio airplay, landing songs on compilations, and playing shows two-to-four nights every week, enough to make her a living. The media showered Ueber with kudos on her strong, penetrating vocals and spirited stage antics. Steve Penhollow of the Journal Gazette coined her “as rubbery and roosteresque as Jagger with an elastic, bottom-heavy voice that recalls British folk legend Joan Armatrading,” adding, “Ueber is a refreshing change from the coquettes, white magic women, studio smoothies and paper divas currently dominating women's music”

Ueber stuck it out with both the band and with her hometown for three years before the feisty itch to move on became overpowering. Shortly after putting finishing touches on Rushmore Whig's full-length debut *Out West*, in 1998, Angela packed up everything she owned and moved precisely in that direction of the compass. First she journeyed to St. Louis where she collaborated with the guitarist of 'Mind Over Soul' and fronted the funky group for a couple of years, before finally following her destined route to LA's sunny coasts.

“You have to be GIGANTIC,” Ueber says of the grueling Hollywood music scene, talking more about self-portrayal than size. But Ueber has the pure talent, self-respect and drive to make it. She's continually re-evaluating, re-recording, practicing and getting it right. The swoony but ultimately self-sufficient narrator of “Perfect Enemy”: “You can make me something beautiful/You can make me lose all control/ You can make me whatever you want/But you'll never make me change my mind,” seems indistinguishable from the resolute-on-success (without self-betrayal) Ueber. Most of Ueber's tunes are directed to an androgynous other: a lover, martyr or enemy, as the case may be. They are musky, steeped in desire and sexual-scent, often playing on themes of power relations.

When asked about her own love-life, Ueber admits it's difficult to find time for a relationship: “Since being in music, when I'm not working or playing I'm usually sleeping because I'm exhausted. That's kind of how it is- you go to work, or practice, or go to the studio...” In terms of preference, Ueber describes herself as “soul-sexual”: “It may sound cheesy but I love good people, and there are so many people in my life that I'm blessed to have as close friends, and I love them how they are. I love that they're gay, I love that they're straight, I love that they're just happy with who they are. So if it happens that there is this one this-is-definitely-it person (of a certain sex) that's just who it is. Whoever or whatever I end up with for the long haul, I don't really care... my family probably would (whatever selection it might be) but I don't.

Angela Ueber seems completely lovable herself. She also happens to be a kick-ass performer. The vocalist left behind a tooth-bitten, red Sharpie that she had used to scribble the names of her tracks onto her newly-burned CDs. It must have rolled to the floor during one of her feverish gesticulations. Cute. I guess I have a souvenir for when her star goes supernova.



Catch Angela Ueber's acoustic show at the Crooked Bar (downstairs from the Coconut Teaser) on 8121 Sunset Blvd. near Crescent Heights on Thursday May 9th, at 11:00PM. Ueber's new self-titled EP is available for \$5 at [www.AngelaUeber.com](http://www.AngelaUeber.com), or by contacting the POWER UP office at (310) 271-4708.

*Candace Moore, a Contributing Editor of Girlfriends Magazine, writes a monthly film review column and freelances on features focusing on Los Angeles entertainment and culture. She received her MFA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University and is currently working on a collection of poems entitled "Dicta-sonnets". Moore is also a Professional Member of POWER UP, Professional Organization of Women in Entertainment Reaching Up, the only national organization of it's kind. With over 500 members in less than its first year POWER UP stands for unity, community, and empowerment. Feel the surge! [www.power-up.net](http://www.power-up.net) (310) 271-4708.*