

TINA DAVIS

Quality. That one word sits at the heart of Tina Davis' musical passion and stewardship of Phase Too Inc. The full-service management company is well known for launching the career of Grammy Award-winning, platinum-selling singer/songwriter/producer Chris Brown. Now Davis and Phase Too are ushering in the next generation of quality, starting with budding Atlantic newcomer Sevyn Streeter.

"Putting out quality talent; that's the goal," says Davis "Setting up and then breaking an artist is certainly part of that process. But the real key is being able to spot a diamond in the rough and make it shine."

And that's the business at hand as Phase Too helms the debut of critically acclaimed singer/songwriter Sevyn Streeter. Signed to Brown's CBE label, Streeter is busy leaving her own imprint. First on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart with the top 15 hit "It Won't Stop" featuring Brown and newly released seven-track EP, *Call Me Crazy, But ...* And then on the road with the sell-out "Rebellious Soul" tour, headlined by Atlantic labelmate K. Michelle plus a memorable performance on BET's "Black Girls Rock!" Formerly a member of disbanded female group Rich Girl, Streeter has spent the last several years polishing her singing and writing skills. In addition to singing on and penning tracks for Brown's *F.A.M.E.* and *Fortune* albums, Streeter has penned songs for Ariana Grande and Kelly Rowland.

But Streeter isn't the only up-and-comer on the Phase Too roster. Founder/president Davis is also in the midst of developing two more talented newcomers: a country singer and a rock band.

Before establishing Los Angeles-based Phase Too, Davis began honing two of her strong suits—discovering talent and artist development—in college. Between mass communication and broadcasting studies at Grambling State University in Louisiana, Davis moonlighted as an air personality for local radio station KRSU. That led to an on-air stint with the syndicated show "Radioscope" and eventual promotion to operations manager for the L.A.-based program.

Love of music came naturally for the Northern California native. As a youngster, Davis watched her father gig in their garage with his own band. "He would have to kick me out," recalls Davis. "I got the bug back then." That bug spurred Davis—who also studied classical piano for eight years—to stage mini-concerts during elementary school recess, influenced by such acts as Natalie Cole and LTD.

Fast forward to 1994 and Davis is learning the publishing end of the business as a creative assistant at Chrysalis Music Publishing. Interacting with a client roster that included OutKast and Macy Gray, she also worked as an assistant at BB King's club at L.A.'s Universal City Walk. That's where she created the popular industry hangout R&B Live, showcasing such fledgling L.A.-bred acts as Brandy and Montell Jordan.

After a year at Chrysalis, Davis was recruited to become an A&R administrator at the West Coast office of revered hip-hop label Def Jam. For someone who never lets a closed door stay shut, Davis "jumped at the opportunity to do something I'd never done before in my life." The jump paid off. While reviewing and logging various tapes, Davis ran across one by Jordan, which gave Def Jam one of its first No. 1 R&B hits, "This Is How We Do It."

Within a year, Davis was promoted to head of Def Jam West. Charged with fortifying the label's Westside rap connections, she worked with such artists as Warren G and XX. Then Def Jam CEO and Davis mentor Lyor Cohen offered another prime opportunity: a move to New York as the label's VP—and later senior VP—of A&R. Over the next 10 years, Davis oversaw the careers of such newcomers and veterans as Jordan, DMX, Method Man, Red Man and LL Cool J. During her L.A. and New York Def Jam tenures, Davis handled A&R administration for various hit soundtracks, including "Rush Hour," "Rush Hour II," "The Nutty Professor II," "Belly" and "How to Be a Player." She also signed eventual multiple Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Ne-Yo and helped develop the label's successful R&B imprint, Def Soul.

Looking back, Davis notes, "Lyor Cohen is the person who put me in every important executive position that I've had in my life. He believed in me from the beginning, telling me that he could put me in any arena and I'd figure out what was best."

That innate sense propelled Davis into the management arena when she simultaneously exited Def Jam and established Phase Too in 2005 with newly signed Jive/RCA artist Brown as her first client. Ten years later, Davis and Phase Too focused on the company's next generation of quality artists and music.

Davis is currently the VP of A&R at EMPIRE Distribution and Records and the Creator and Executive Producer of BET music competition Show The Next Big Thing.