

# Throwback: Deniece Williams-Free



[youtube id="0lLrn6AVV2s"] Deniece Williams was a session singer for Stevie Wonder's Wonderlove, Minnie Riperton and Syreeta Wright before she scored a solo deal with Columbia in 1975. She originally sent most of the songs from her debut album to Earth, Wind & Fire for Philip Bailey. Surprisingly, she ended up recording the songs with EW&F with Maurice White and frequent collaborator Charles Stepney producing the bubbling soul of *This Is Niocy*. The band's orchestrated jazz funk harmoniously fit with Williams's incredible range and sublime soprano. "Free" was her breakout song and it demonstrated the fierce control of her higher octaves within a whisper. "Free" and "It's Important To Me" helmed *This Is Niocy*'s commercial success. Williams's prime period was at its beginning and she would continue to assert the nimbleness of her vocals until the end of the '80s with signature songs and outstanding albums. In 2017, Williams launched her [YouTube](#) channel with three new series to teach viewers vocal techniques, share stories about her career and give inspirational messages.