

Throwback: Vanity 6-Nasty Girl



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Denise Matthews was the lead singer of Prince's 1981 all-woman trio Vanity 6. Matthews was Vanity and Susan Moonsie (Susan) and Brenda Bennett (Brenda) were the other two women in the group. Prince's original idea was to include Susan, Brenda and Jamie Shoop to form a lineup called The Hookers in the '70s. He met Vanity at The American Music Awards in 1980 and asked her to join the group. "Nasty Girl" was Vanity 6's second single and it was a hit. Vanity 6 wore lingerie and became the female counterpart to Prince's sexual revolution. "Nasty Girl" dominated R&B radio stations but the risqu  lyrics kept it away from pop playlists.  Prince wrote and produced all the songs on their album but he gave Vanity songwriting credit for "Nasty Girl." They released one album and opened for Prince with The Time on the 1999  tour before disbanding in 1983. Vanity was supposed to be in Purple Rain and there were plans for a second album until she left Prince's camp and got a record deal with Motown. She recorded two albums for Motown

and had success with the R&B hit "Mechanical Emotion" that featured Morris Day. Vanity made a dozen movies and most famously starred in the cult classic *The Last Dragon*. The period of the late '80s to the early '90s also saw Vanity appearing on various television shows. In the early '90s, Vanity left the entertainment business and became born again denouncing her stage name and persona. She attributed her life change to an almost death experience from drug abuse which led to an encounter with Jesus. The rest of her life was spent honoring her spirituality and spreading the word of God as an evangelist. Her autobiography, *Blame It On Vanity: Hollywood, Hell and Heaven* was released in 2010. In 2016, Vanity died at age 57 of renal failure just months before Prince's passing in April.Â