

OUT OF HOURS

BY DAY, A BUSINESS ANALYST UPGRADING SHELL'S RETAIL IT SYSTEMS. BY NIGHT, A SINGER OF HER OWN SULTRY SONGS. MEET NICOLA FELGENTREU.

Nicola Felgentreu



Not like Britney

By the time you read this, Nicola's first album, *Bright Outlook*, should have been released and her fame may be far greater than can be contained in a single page of *Shell World*.

Or maybe not, because Nicola is clear that she writes and performs her songs for pleasure rather than the fickle rewards of celebrity. The album is self-financed and not really intended for the charts.

Now 26 and from Hamburg in Germany, Nicola started singing in her school choir. "I've been writing songs since my early teens and I have learned and improved a lot over recent years," says Nicola, whose stage name is Nikki Felle ("because people who don't speak German find my surname difficult to pronounce").

"As well as the school choir, I joined a youth choir that sang chart songs and we toured Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. Nowadays, you'll find me playing regular gigs at pubs in and around London, performing my own set."

A few months ago, Nicola was a finalist in the UK Songwriting Contest, and as *Shell World* went to press, she was due to sing in the semi-final of the Open Mic UK competition.

Now working at Shell Centre in London, Nicola joined the company straight from school at 19. Shell sponsored her on a business and marketing degree at the *Wirtschaftsakademie Hamburg*, a business school.

"I am a perfectionist, which I hope comes out in my work as much as it does in my music," says Nicola. "I want every song I write to be the best I can possibly achieve, even if it takes a little longer, so it's a slow process, especially with having to work full-time during the day."


"Finding all the energy in the evenings and at the weekends can be challenging."

Nicola describes her musical style as "pop music, but not like Britney Spears". It's mellow and melodic, somewhere between Duffy and Norah Jones, with lots of piano and a touch of jazz.

Despite the adrenaline rush she gets from performing, Nicola seems to keep her feet firmly on the ground. "I don't dress up in any crazy way, I just put on a nice dress. I want the music to be the star, not me."

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And if the album takes off? "I'll just get a few more CDs made to meet demand. I might try bigger venues, but I like the intimacy of the pubs where I usually perform." 

To listen to Nicola's music, to find out how she got on in the Open Mic UK competition and to buy her album *Bright Outlook*, visit her website: www.nikkifelle.com

