

CHICAGO-BASED CHANTÉ LINWOOD REALLY IS DOING IT ALL

BY KINSEY LITTON

A quick glance into Chanté Linwood's life is all you need to feel like you're not doing enough. Between blazing her own path as a Chicago-based DJ, actor and comedian; raising two beautiful young boys; and founding an organization to encourage collaboration among creative women, you could say being busy is her specialty. With a background in improv, her witty and self-deprecating humor is not surprising but reflective of the humility she possesses and encourages in others, "In any spaces I may feel unsure about, I first make sure I'm not trying to lead conversations in those spaces, and then I try to learn as much as possible." But don't let her humility fool you. She is the first to stand behind the causes she has spent so many years fighting for, both in her personal and professional life. Being a woman in an industry that is largely male-dominated and only comfortable with women when used as props, Chanté is accustomed to creating her own reality. She sat down with PUSH Mag to tell us a little bit about her organization, inspiration and just how she maintains her sanity...sometimes.



PHOTOS BY BIANCA GARCIA





A photograph of a person's arm and hand holding a large, vibrant pink rose. The person is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a light blue denim jacket. They are standing in front of a black metal fence with ornate details. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting. The image has a dark, textured overlay on the left side with yellow and white splatters.

PUSH Mag: Tell me a little bit about your organization, Cliché. What are your primary goals for the women involved?

Chanté Linwood: Cliché is ever-evolving. Our goals have always been to uplift, empower and shine a light on creative womyn. Creative to us is anyone that is passionate about anything and produces something from that passion. You could be passionate about animals and be creating spaces for supporting them; to us that is still a creator or a creative. Our primary goals are to continuously work with womyn and expand. There are a lot of people doing similar work that we do, one of our main goals right now is to collaborate with these other organizations and people to create one larger, beautiful community of us all working together instead of all these smaller ones.

P.M: You are a DJ as well, how do you practice self-care in an industry that can be so draining?

C.L: I don't know if I am very good at this actually. I would say hanging with my kids, but if I'm being real...that can be draining too, haha. Other than that, I drink. I drink alcohol.

P.M: What does being active mean to you?

C.L: To me being an active member of society is so important. I think we are way past the time of living in blissful ignorance. I think it's important to think about everything we do and how that can affect the people around us. People 'round these parts call it being woke. Once you are awake or "woke" to all of life's issues, injustices, inequality, sexism, misogyny, patriarchy, etc., it is hard to walk around every day and not be upset by something or feel the need to help someone understand why something they said or did is problematic or killing society's progress.

P.M: What do the women in your life do for you?

C.L: The womyn in my life are my husbands, my best friends, my baby mommas, my confidants, my platonic lovers, my everything. I could not live without my bitches.

P.M: What, in your opinion, are the benefits from collaborating both in general and with other creative women?

C.L: Everything. Collaborating with womyn is such a rewarding experience. I feel we connect on just different levels and we understand one another differently. Womyn really are shifting from the societal pressures and stereotypes that we are constantly competing with one another. It's beautiful. Womyn are so powerful even without realizing it so when we come together and create anything, it's prettayyy prettayyy saawweet (read in Larry David voice).



P.M: What is your advice for other entrepreneurial women when it comes to overcoming obstacles while building their career?

C.L: There are no obstacles that cannot be overcome. If you want to do something and you are giving yourself a laundry list of things that are keeping you from doing it, you might not want it bad enough. When you want something, you find a way to get it. Whether it's craving a burrito for lunch or needing a computer to start djing, you figure out a way to get what you want.

P.M: What is one cliché about women that you want to stop talking about?

C.L: I'm really over men and womyn slut shaming womyn. If you like being naked, if you like having sex, if you like being sexual, do it. Who cares. Let's all stop caring what others choose to do with their bodies. Oh, yea that includes men feeling the need to make our bodies subject to their personal beliefs or politics. #yourpusssystemchoice

P.M: What messages do we need to make sure young women are getting, and how do we do that?

C.L: Love yourself and be yourself. Do not let anyone—especially a man—dictate who and what you should be. Also, support your sisters, and support without criticism and judgement. Unless your girls are actually tweaking.

P.M: I know you are raising two beautiful boys, why do you think men need feminism?

C.L: The more men understand the need for equality among genders (people in general), the better the world and life will be. Everything about us (womyn) is beautiful and amazing. We can create and sustain life with just our bodies, shit is insane! Bottom line: Men need us for way more than just our bodies, they need to stop explicitly objectifying us and acknowledge our worth. That is how I'm trying (keyword: trying) to raise my boys. Parenting is hard.

P.M: Any future projects you are working on?

C.L: Ummm. *Maniacally twiddles fingers and rubs beard*. Yes, there are many. Subscribe to the Cliché newsletter and follow our social media @werecliche so you don't miss out. We have some amazing panels, parties and events coming up. And if you don't follow us already, you might want to. Just sayin'... ▲