



Naydja Cojoe – Biography

Naydja Cojoe is a dynamic smooth jazz, soul, and R&B vocalist from New Orleans, Louisiana, and the newest member of the legendary girl group The Dixie Cups. Her journey into music began early, singing and playing piano during her youth at a New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) summer camp. She continued performing throughout high school, winning numerous competitions and awards for her vocal and instrumental talents¹.

Musical Journey

Though family and work took precedence for a time, Naydja reignited her musical path in 2001, touring with Southern soul artist Mel Waiters. This experience helped her develop her stage presence and sharpen her performance skills. Her return to New Orleans and first appearance at the French Quarter Festival was a turning point—her “Aha” moment—where she realized she belonged on stage.

She went on to mentor with New Orleans music legends Michael “Soulman” Baptiste and Kermit Ruffins, eventually forming her own band, The Lagniappe Section, and performing with groups like The Ladies of Soul (alongside Sharon Martin and Rechell Cook). Her repertoire spans soul, gospel, jazz, R&B, and tributes to icons like Billie Holiday and Gloria Estefan¹.

Joining The Dixie Cups

Naydja’s career reached a new milestone when she was invited to join The Dixie Cups, the iconic 1960s girl group known for hits like “Chapel of Love” and “Iko Iko.” She now performs alongside Barbara Ann Hawkins, the last original member, and Athelgra Neville Gabriel, sister of The Neville Brothers¹.

Community & Advocacy

Beyond music, Naydja is a community health advocate, using her voice and platform to support causes like dementia awareness—highlighting how music can help patients reconnect with memories. She’s also a frequent speaker and guest on podcasts, sharing her story of perseverance, passion, and purpose.

Recent Performances

Naydja continues to perform at major New Orleans events including:

- **French Quarter Festival**
- **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival**
- **Danny Barker Festival**
- **Improvisations Gala with Dee Dee Bridgewater and Kermit Ruffins**