

LISA J. CARMAN

Lisa was born and raised in the Rochester, New York area, when jazz and swing music seemed to rule the city and surrounding suburbs. I have vivid memories of hiding in my upstairs room when my parents would have dinner parties blasting the records of Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee. As I listened to their music, I was developing my own musical identity, which had nothing to do with what I was hearing, or so I thought. I first pestered my parents for piano lessons and was started up as a third grader when I touched the keys. I floated to some other destination, a sense of connection and divine.

As a junior high kid my life changed around three events; My fathers phonograph was the first. I spent countless hours leaning over with my ear pitched to the speaker singing all the harmonies to the Supremes, the Beach Boys, and my older brothers 50's be-bop. Then came the British invasion and I fell in love as any normal budding musician would. I cut my hair like a Beatle, joined the original fan club, and begged and again pestered my parents for a guitar for Christmas. An electric guitar. (They surprised me and came through). But the real discovery as a singer was the bevy of female singer-songwriters in the so called "Folk-rock" revolution. Bingo! I wanted to be one of them! I wanted to be like them! I dreamed inside their music as I listened and knew I would someday write music to channel all my innermost feelings too. I was buying the albums and pouring over the artwork and printed lyrics, always singing along but enjoying the harmony as much or more as the melody. So I played that guitar and sang every day all through high school.

Meanwhile, in my high school life, I had the French horn, my guitar, choir, and group voice classes, and not to forget social pressure that seemed secondary. My first debut performance was at our high school coffeehouse.. I discovered my first major block.. serious stage fright. I recall shaking , literally shaking before and after my one song.. my very virginal version of "leavin' on a jet plane"... but it all began at that point.. the thrill and high of performing, sharing, and laying your soul out on the line... of wanting to believe you can.. instead of maybe.. or can't. After school I was singing in a four piece vocal mamas and papas group, at fancy parties, and standing up front as a lead singer in a rock band that played at local dances and some college frat parties.

College? Oh yea. I thought I knew what I wanted there- by the grace of my perfect pitch and sight reading skills I was admitted to the crane school of music at the NY State University in Potsdam. I enjoyed music theory and the private lessons, but disliked feeling inferior to all the opera voices around me. I attended the classes I liked and skipped and ones I didn't like. my head was in a musical fog of doing what everyone else was doing, and I was immature to organize and prioritize me. in all of that I actually learned solid music theory and how to

classically sing. By now I was pouring over the electric revolution of 70's rock- still loving that British flavor. I began performing in the little pubs with my second guitar, one of the first Yamaha 12 strings made performing the songs of my favorite recording artists, and trying out my first couple attempts at songwriting. all the while that musical "voice" was driving me to perform. and, at the same time I was totally nervous at measuring up. I , too, began experimenting with open tunings and finger picking. down deep , in the youthful heart, all I wanted was to write and perform.

Fast forward to post college days, I talked the talk, but was slow in walking the walk- daydreaming and baby steps, helped be closer- some playing in the Chatham NY area- note worthy compliments- but the biological urge to "be in family" took precedence. While being married and having three children, I was lucky to make music, a lot of original music with my long time favorite partner, sally McCarthy.

We spent twenty glorious years in musicianship and friendship and mommyship. Saw each other through huge life changes as well as our own musical evolution. Opening for famous people, delving into theater arts, and the beginning for me to teach the music to others. What started as financial reasons, turned out to be my real calling. To be a part of my children's lives in the community, to truly teach the joy of singing and playing and performing, and yet still have my creativity with personal music, it was idyllic for many years. First album.. born of a combination of country music and Broadway influences.. still I wrote it and sang it from my heart. "Full Moon, Montana, and You", a combined effort of the swing band we were playing with and hired professionals I hardly knew-big learning experience for the first studio album. Many tunes still stand the test of time- I revamp them all the time and audiences love them.

Life flies by and families grow up.. there is a time frame where all I remember is loving and being in our family-I branched out into directing musical theater and community events- formed a teen company dedicated to giving back to our community- all my students who studied with me were very serious musical souls, and lived for the thrill of performing, yet learned team values. I was so very proud of "the calamity kids", and all their major talents. Each and every one of that first company formed, have gone into literal show business or aspects directly related to it. Health issues and career choices began to change the "perfect life". Empty nest, and callings to the western part of the United States, changed life irrevocably.

I relocated to central Montana, as our family had a cabin hideaway we had spent over a decade of summers in. Part of the move was to create a community theater with a dear collaborator I had grown close to each summer in Montana. Sarah Stevenson built the facility, I moved to Montana to direct to her producing, and hence, the garage theater came to be. such a time! creating a multi- arts resource where none had ever been before- major history was made and lives on

in all of us. All the stage work and forming yet another teen company, "the Roadsters." Memories such as these are to be treasured forever. There, I began to understand the beauty of sharing knowledge, and being humble, and satisfied all at the same time. My life changed again as I became single- my children began their own lives, and I hungered for writing my own music once more. Dear friends in Lewistown Montana, picked me up, off of useless desires, and made it possible to begin... again.. except this time I was in a position to focus, write from all of my experiences, and have a second chance to put it all out there.

Here comes the second CD almost twenty years later... "Naked Heart." Rough cut , truly bare, pure desire and passion....done with Virginia and Bob Wise, in their basement recording studio over popcorn, wine, beer, and deep love. What more can a resurging artist ask for? I play all these tunes yet today, and many of them are requested over and over.

So she sings and moves.. to Missoula, Montana.. to find a better music scene and a band. I found more growth musically.. found out negative musical people, and positive musical team players. You always learn what is right.. but do we listen? I recorded my third CD "Heart Songs". some redo's more effectively done, some new tunes, so new they are raw, but still the content speaks for itself. I worked with a all new band, after auditioning many pickers, yet I had much to learn in standing my ground and being clear with what the music needed to be- in Missoula, I was lead to Dan Marfisi in L.A. of Joneshouse studios. He specialized recording in a package at that time- a MP3 format, rhythm tracks pre-done in studio, with approval and input all along the way from the artist- awesome for a still doubting at times me-I went to L.A. for a whole month of intense recording vocals, session players, and mixing and mastering . Dan and I hit it off- he is a straight shooter- he is brilliant in communication regarding the music- he gave me whatever I wanted with clear production and direction.

So "Tame Me" was born and IS my first sellable, reliable, get me jobs CD etc. work of music. On the road post "Tame Me", I was adrift- I was in need of a home- didn't totally pay attention to my needs. Only paid attention to the needs of the music. So I went to the east coast... the Carolinas to be exact- I threw myself into the inland scene very scared- very -"who is this person you?" I was blessed to discover that humankind is and will be, very loving and supportive- Rock Hill, South Carolina, welcomed me with a following of listeners where I played, open other musicians, wonderful promotional media, and a lead guitar player who was semi-famous in the south and chose to play with me! Danny Guyton and I tore up the classy restaurants and big street fairs, and what he gave me , was a reaffirmation of my worth- I have never up until then, nor have I since, worked with such a talented musician who was beyond good, healthy attitude, and supportive ,while fun, all rolled into one package. But the south was not my home- it was my "home" away from home .I missed my family and that is the simple truth of it- I am westernized and familized- hence.. I relocated "one more time"- and it is not easy as you get older- to Santa Fe, New Mexico this last year-

I am beyond blessed here, to have spent ten months networking and being visible and singing EVERYTHING-and for the past two years drawing in three other fine, fine, musicians who wish to play all my original music. Cris Phillips (bass/harmony), Adrienne Bellis (duet vocal), and Caitlin Thomas on violin-violin. Lucky for me to add occasionally Dave Devlin picking mandolin and dobro.

October 2006 I began recording the 5th CD and wow, did it ever go through huge conceptual changes. After researching many studios and options, I chose Stepbridge Studio and Michael Chavez to engineer and assist in producing. The CD changed its name many times, while totally new grooves were found for favorite songs from previous "raw" CD's and creating "new" sounds for freshly written tunes. I felt compelled to include beautiful renditions of earlier favorites, as they needed to be heard properly; like something I needed to honor to let go of. For the first time in my recording life, I made all the decisions, musical and otherwise. I learned so very much, that the final mastering in May 2007, left me exhausted but fulfilled. And I'm excited to continue all aspects of the recording process.

The Treasures and Trash Cd was good to me! The single "Count Me In" won country song of the year at the 2008 New Mexico Music Awards. The song "Unspoken" from the record was nominated in the Americana category as well. "Count Me In" was chosen to be included on Violet Femmes Volume 2 CD, of 20 women from around the world. An added element in the last two years is the pleasure of producing other songwriters music, as they fulfill their dream of recording a record. Talented students morph into performing songwriters, and seek their own artistic "moment in time." I relish the role of directing, editing, listening, and understanding how to have the artist relaxed and satisfied. Communicating between the team of players and writer, and always seeking the joy spot. This year 2011 garners more nominations as a producer and co writer in the New Mexico Music Awards. And the instruction job of "traveling teacher/director," I am proud to implement. Absolutely love packing up sound gear, lesson plans, and a show outline in hand, to travel to and live in a favorite location. From New Mexico to central Montana to the coast of Oregon. Am on it! Stay tuned for the double CD release on July 17th 2011. At times it takes the opening of the creative gates to move the project along. To realize the gratefulness to make original music of the heart.

And, as I am here today in Santa Fe, again, offering and teaching the support to dozens of students.. young and old.. I return to my roots of believing, sharing ,making music, because it brings self esteem and confidence to anyone who wishes to allow music into their lives. and this time, I am allowing my own belief that the gift of music is very very very real. Write and share thoughts- I will love to hear from you! Keep the melody and the harmony always coming

— Lisa Carman