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Harmonious Kisses
By Melissa Yerkov

The music industry possesses a fast paced ambiance complete with a survival of the fittest mentality, forcing musicians to exude perseverance, courage, passion, and most importantly, the drive to succeed.

Which is why Doylestown resident, Christy Jefferson is so proud to release her third album, entitled When Kisses Take Prisoners. She has embraced the cutthroat perceptions of the business and overcame obstacles such as nearly fatal car accidents, having all her equipment stolen and studio shut-downs.

Yet, every time Jefferson was knocked down, she bounced back stronger, with a smile on her face and guitar in her hands.

Jefferson, 25, describes her music as “folk rock with a little bit of cabaret. And when playing with the band, we adapt an edge of blues.” Musical influences such as Tori Amos, Counting Crows, Billy Joel and Elton John are apparent with Jefferson’s unique stylistic sound.

Jefferson has been captivated by the art of music her entire life, beginning in elementary school, where she wrote lyrics, sang in the choir and played the piano, and later broadened her talents with the guitar in High school.

By her senior year of high school, Jefferson was active in several bands, in addition to her involvement with the music department in school. She entered Kutztown University as a freshman majoring in graphic design. However, halfway through her sophomore year, Jefferson decided to follow her heart and dreams of pursuing music as a professional career and changed her major to music.

“I am happy every moment I am playing music,” said Jefferson. “And so I decided music is what I wanted to do.”

Understanding this is an extremely difficult industry to enter, Jefferson gave herself a six-month deadline after graduation. This time was allotted to generate enough money for living expenses as well as business expenditures.

Determined and excited, Jefferson sent out over 100 press kits in six months, trying to maintain a positive outlook.

“I was very persistent with my pursuit,” said Jefferson. “You have to get through the no’s to get to the Yes.”

Continuously sending out media information, networking, and performing as often as possible, Jefferson’s embracing sounds quickly generated a loyal fan base.

“I love performing live because I am totally in the soul of the song and the audience is right there with me,” said Jefferson. “There’s an energy exchange. It’s a shared experience.”

These feelings are shared by her fans, who continue to return the love and loyalty Jefferson exhibits. She attributes this support to helping her overcome one of the hardest experiences of her career. In February 2004, Jefferson ventured to the CBGB Club in New York City for a live performance. Before the show, she spent time speaking with the other musicians and employees of the venue, leaving her equipment concealed and locked away in the trunk of her car. Once her performance time approached, she went to retrieve her keyboard, guitar, and amps out of the trunk, only to find them stolen.

Confused and devastated by the situation, she reported the incident to the police, however the treasured instruments were never recovered. She did not have the money to replace the items and questioned the troubling incident as a sign that she was not meant to play music.

After Jefferson spent days questioning her career, a good friend convinced her to write an email to everyone on her mailing list, explaining the situation and asking for help.

The response was incredible.

Countless emails were returned, sharing similar stories, offering help and even donating money, and within three days, Jefferson was able to replace all of the stolen equipment.

“It really helped the healing process to know I wasn’t alone and these types of things happen all the time,” said Jefferson. “I felt reassurance that music is what I’m supposed to do, and I’m definitely a stronger person because of the experience. My fans were able to take something ugly and make it one of the most beautiful things that has ever happened to me.”

Jefferson soon wrote a song, Comin’ Round, about the experience, which later won first place in the Musselman Triathlon CD Compilation Competition – a contest composed of more than 30,000 contestants.

Writing the majority of lyrics herself, Jefferson strives to take situations such as this and format them into her songs. Other lyrics can be attributed to her crazy imagination and looking deeper into everyday situations.

One perfect example of Jefferson’s imaginative powers can be heard in Speedy, a track from her Live in Philly album. The inspiration for Speedy came from a friend with a pet fish. She had gotten two snails to eat the algae from the fishbowl and named one of them Speedy. After arriving home from work, Jefferson’s friend found Speedy on the floor, half way between the fishbowl and the door. Looking further into the situation, Jefferson’s mind wandered – suicide or bravery?

“You see Speedy’s fishbowl was eye level to the window, where he had a beautiful view of the green trees and blue skies of the world outside his fishbowl home,” explained Jefferson.

So her enticing question after evaluating Speedy’s death – would you risk your life for freedom?

It takes a wild imagination and pure soul to be able to transform the death of a snail into a mind exploration evaluating freedom. And this is just one example of Jefferson’s creativity.

Speedy can be found on Jefferson's Live in Philly album, which is a recording of her performance at the Tin Angel in December 2004. Although the performance was an overwhelming success, while driving to the show, a run-in with an 18-wheeler truck on the turnpike nearly took the life of the singer/songwriter.

"I still can't believe I walked out of it alive," said Jefferson. "I saw the whole thing in slow motion. An eighteen-wheeler hit a car, sending it three lanes over directly into me. I hit my brakes and the car slammed into me on the driver's side door. There was heavy traffic at the time. I really thought I was going to die."

Miraculously, Jefferson suffered only minor injuries and shockingly still made it to her performance. Her arrival may have been late, but the near-death experience and adrenaline rush of surviving illuminated an indescribable energy to the show.

Jefferson likes to view all these life experiences as signs: There are reasons behind these encounters, and she strives to develop a comprehension for their purpose.

With the upcoming release of her new album, Jefferson is ecstatic that her three-year project is finally perfectly completed. With studios being shut down, recorded tapes getting eaten and time running out, the project was arduous, but according to Jefferson, it was completely worth every minute.

"I have grown tremendously throughout the album," said Jefferson. "I learned to overcome weaknesses and maximize strengths."

The overall theme of Jefferson's newest release is "kisses," which can be widely attributed to her love for a painting composed by artist Gustav Klimt entitled, The Kiss.

"It is my favorite painting and the theme unifies the whole album," said Jefferson. "Kisses are poetic, and the ones mentioned in my songs symbolize different things."

Overcoming many tribulations that would discourage most musicians, Jefferson has become stronger and enlightened by the bumps in her road. With motivations of spreading her beloved sound, she has continued to persevere with a determination to spread entertainment and guidance.

"Music is a multi-dimensional experience for me," said Jefferson. "I want my music to help make people's lives more beautiful and spread understanding."

A CD release party and performance will be held this Saturday at 7 pm at Wired Gallery and Frame in Bethlehem.