



Schu's Crossing

Talented Milwaukee Singer-Song Writer Debuts First EP Album

Cancer scare inspires artist to pursue her musical gifts and embrace the unknown *BY STEVE SCHUSTER*



Photo by Melissa Miller

Wake-up calls can manifest in many different forms, but for Milwaukee native Lisa Ridgely, an ovarian cancer scare changed her life and inspired her to pursue her musical talents leading to the release of her first EP album this week, "Wine In Bed."

Three years ago shortly after Ridgely's 30th Birthday she received word from a physician that she had a large tumor on one of her ovaries.

"I had just turned 30, and I was feeling wonderful and healthy ... I go from being on top of the world to being flung off the edge of it within just a few days. From feeling like I had everything under control to feeling like something very important, my health, was beyond my control," Ridgely said during an interview with Schu's Crossing April 28.

Only days later, was Ridgely scheduled for surgery, which made her literally praying for her own life. Suffice it to say, she was in dire need of a distraction.

Ridgely said, "I knew for the sake of my mental health, I needed to focus on something else, something positive. I asked myself, if I could do one thing before I die, what would it be?"

The answer?

"Play an open mic," she said, which was quite a detour from prior choir and musical activities, and her goal of writing a book. You see, by trade, Ridgely is a journalist – now turned magazine editor by day and singer-song writer by night.

"I never had ambitions to take my bedroom project public. I never in a million years thought this was the direction my life would take," Ridgely said.

Ridgely is grateful for her support system.

"I could not have done it without the support of my friends," she added.

Fortunately for Ridgely, her doctor later discovered she didn't have a tumor.

"I'm incredibly lucky that my health scare was nothing more than a scare; having witnessed the cancer diagnosis of a dear coworker (who later lost the battle) at the same time I was having a false alarm ... put things into sober perspective. If anything, I hope my story can inspire others to invest energy into things they're passionate about, and to be brave, even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard," Ridgely said.

MOST VIEWED

1. The Perfectionist

POSTED 2/20/2012

2. John Doe Threatens

Walker

POSTED 1/31/2012

3. Best Schools

POSTED 3/9/2012

4. Street Smarts

POSTED 1/23/2012

5. A Few Minutes with Buzz

POSTED 2/7/2012

MOST COMMENTED

1. John Doe Threatens

Walker

POSTED 1/31/2012

2. Art Bar

POSTED 1/18/2012

3. How Involved is too

Involved?

POSTED 5/1/2012

4. Best Schools

POSTED 3/9/2012

5. The High Cost of Sheriff

Clarke

POSTED 1/19/2012

Her brush with fate has also turned to be a source of musical inspiration, along with other reveries and regrets she said.

"Life is a delicate balance of holding on and letting go and I struggle with that a lot," Ridgely said, a far from subtle theme throughout the album.

Overall recording the album has been a tremendous experience she said.

"This has been a good lesson in patience and trusting my instincts about people and timing, as well as a reminder that I've been fortunate to befriend amazing musicians and supporters," Ridgely said.

After performing her songs as a solo artist for a few years, Ridgely decided to expand her sound with a backing band, The Fainting Room, according to an April 23 press release.

The Fainting Room features Level 5 Guitar Jedi (2012 WAMI Award-winning Guitarist of the Year) Ryan Elliott, who also plays with local stalwarts the Form and rockers The Great Lakes Drifters, 2012 WAMI Best New Artist winners, the release states.

The album, which features a handful of soulful and heart-filled, creatively written, pop songs, offers a unique feminine undertone – it's a must listen! ***** (5 stars) A+

The album can be purchased on the iTunes store or on Lisa Ridgely's [website](#).

"One overriding theme of the EP is longing – longing to escape Wisconsin winters, longing to be with long-lost friends and lovers, longing to know why life throws curveballs, longing to know why people hurt one another, and most importantly, longing to know thyself. And that last song, well, it speaks for itself," Ridgely said.

As a side note:

Ridgely will be performing live at an EP release show at Club Garibaldi, 2501 S. Superior St., in Bay View on Friday, May 4 at 10 p.m. Chris DeMay and Field Report (formerly known as Conrad Plymouth, and fresh off a national tour opening for Megafaun) will share the stage.

Also be sure to listen to Lisa Ridgely on WMSE 91.7 FM's local and live radio show Tuesday, May 1 at 8 p.m.

Like Tweet 5 PRINT | EMAIL

TAGS: [LISA RIDGELY](#) [CANCER](#)

Why should my company sponsor public radio ? PARTNER with WUWM 89.7 BUSINESS DRIVE MAY 3

Readers' Comments

You must login to post a comment. [Login](#) or [Register](#)