



Interview: Heidi Duss / Foto: Kurt Frei

Interview with Jenny Casey, Nashville 06.06.2013

Hello Jenny, I understand you are from Oklahoma, please tell us about it.

Yes I am from Oklahoma, I grew up and lived there pretty much all my life. I went to school, worked, met my husband, and had kids. Then at some point, I decided I'd like to be a country artist. Actually, I came to that decision pretty late in life.

What triggered you to make that decision?

I always loved music, when I was a kid I played the piano by ear. One of my secret talents is that I can play with my toe. My mother was an opera singer, so I listened to all kinds of different music including country, pop, rock, and of course opera. Then when I had a family, I would sing while doing housework, just crank up the radio and sing along. I guess something inside me was telling me that I wanted to be a singer. I went to school to be a teacher because I had a family and children, and I needed to be responsible for things. I had two kids before I started college, and then had two more while I was in college, it was a lot of work. I also helped my husband with his business, he was gone a lot. It was a very exhausting time for me. I think the exhaustion and the stress of having so much to do made me turn to songwriting.

One day, while I was in bed studying, I felt so overwhelmed with life, I had four kids and was enrolled in college full time. My youngest daughter, who was two months old at the time, was laying in bed next to me. I took one of my notebooks from class and started writing a song. It felt so good to do that, to get the emotions out, afterwards I felt so relieved, it was amazing. The writing just sort of evolved from that. I kept on singing around the house and one day my husband showed up with a guitar. I never played a guitar before, so I started messing around with it and learning as much as I could. Then I started singing my songs with the guitar, just a little bit at a time. One day I got up the nerve to sing before a crowd, that really was nerve wracking since I had never done that before. Pretty soon though, I knew that I really wanted to do this.

I came to Nashville to do some recording, and then visited again, looking around and wondering if it would be a good place to live. We would have to move a whole family, six people and change everybody's life. But I knew that's what I needed to do. Then I applied for teaching jobs and came back for interviews. I remember the day I was here in 2008 and had gotten some job offers. When I was driving down the highway I just felt sick, wondering what to do. If I said yes, it would change everybody's life, not just mine, I wanted to do the right thing for my family. We all decided and I accepted a job as a third grade teacher and we moved and here we are.

I started teaching and when I had the time, went around Nashville trying to meet people and just figure out, what to do and how to go about it. A Bar that was near where we lived had a sign out saying that they had a writer's night. I didn't know what that was so I asked about it, the guy there was really nice and said yea, come on by and sing some of your songs. I pretended to know exactly what it was all about and had no problem doing that. I went home and practiced and practiced and practiced. I had to remember three songs and play them on my guitar! It did go well though and they were very nice there, so I started to do more and more.

Just within the last year and a half, I got together with someone and we decided to work together. I met this person the first week I moved here and we stayed in touch all through the years. He is a great writer and is also an amazing producer. He wanted to do some work with my stuff because he liked it. We recorded some of my songs and did an EP, and now we are working on a full length album. It will be finished this summer. It has just some of my crazy, dorky working mom songs on there. I hope that mom's and working women can connect with some of the songs, that guys can laugh about them and everybody can have some fun. My inspiration for writing just comes from real life, what I have done all my life, being a mom and working. I found an outlet in music, hopefully I also found a way to entertain people, to laugh about real life instead of taking things so seriously. It has been my therapy, if something is real frustrating, I write a funny song about it and it makes me feel better.

Do you write mostly funny songs?

I have a lot of funny songs, but I also have some serious songs. I tend to write funny things because it makes me feel better. But I do have some emotional songs that have come out too. One of them I wrote before my oldest son graduated from high school and was leaving home to go to college. For a mom this can be very emotional, I always dreaded him leaving. So one rainy day I went out on the porch, let the emotions come out and wrote a song about the changes that were about to happen. The song is called „My Boy“.

What other Songs will be on your album?

There is a song called „The Mother Load“ which is a fun song with clever lyrics about having so much to do. Another funny song is called „Dishman“, it describes that if your husband wants your attention, he can go and do some dishes, and that will get things going. It is kind of a rocky – bluesy song. Another song is called „Flour Sack Dress“, which is a bit more sentimental and is dedicated to one of my grandmothers. It's kind of a bedtime story, a lullaby song. It's about me telling my children about the bedtime stories my grandmother told me. She grew up on a farm and used to tell me those wild stories and I never forgot them. They got passed on from generation to generation, so I wrote the song about me telling the same stories to my children.

Then there is a song called „They Don't Pay Me Enough“. I'm sure a lot of people can relate to that! When I wrote that song, I had a bad day at work and was really exhausted. Gretchen Wilson and Big & Rich were having a concert that night here in Nashville and I wanted to go, but nobody had the time to go with me. So I went by myself and I had a blast. On the drive home, I was so inspired by that concert, I wrote the song on the way, thinking they don't pay me enough for me to be stressed out like this.

I hope, when people hear my songs, they will think, wow, this is different, I never heard music like that. I hope they will find it entertaining and fun. It's just stuff people go through all the time, but it seems like you never really hear music about it. The album will be called „Rockin' the House“. I got the idea for that name from a lady that gave me five stars on a review on iTunes. She commented, „I saw her live and she rocked the house“. Plus I've spent years rockin' around my own house, rocking my babies, and so on. It just seemed to all tie together, so I thought that would be a good name for the album.

Is this your first album?

Several years ago, I did some recordings in Nashville right after I had just started writing. I put some songs out, which was a great experience. But I was brand new at everything and was just learning. So I would really consider this my first album. My producer and I have put a lot of heart and soul into it, and I think it really represents who I am as a singer, songwriter, and performer. I have big plans for it and am very excited to get it released!

Are you planning to do tours?

I definitely would love to. I am a mom and have family, but my dream is to be an entertainer and to entertain crowds. I'm ready to go out there.

Does your family support you?

Absolutely! They came a long way to be here and are 100% behind me. I also have some musical kids at home, so maybe some day they will be in my band.

Anything else that you would like to tell people?

I would like to say hello to everybody, I can't wait to come and see you. I'm so excited to meet people and hope that they will really enjoy listening to my music.

http://www.jennycasey.com/fr_home.cfm

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