

Singer Songwriter Lynn Biddick from LaCrosse, WI

Releases her 4th Record "
Ghost in the Bed"



My friend, Lance Cowan from LC Media out of Nashville asked me if I had ever heard of Lynn Biddick? He said she is up from your neck of the woods. He offered to set up an interview with her. Below is some information on Lynn's background obtained from her website: www.lynnbiddick.com

Lynn Biddick was born in the upper Mississippi River town La Crosse WI, and started playing the piano at age 5. She wrote her first song at the age of 9 while riding a bicycle. She says, "My creative work has always had a multi-tasking element running through it. I have never done just one thing at a time."

She moved to Boston MA to attend Berklee College of Music where she majored in piano and composition. When she moved out of the dorms, she taught herself how to play a mountain dulcimer, which became an important part of her performing and songwriting. She was a street musician in Boston and Cambridge, and eventually moved into the clubs and coffeehouses in New England.

Her interest in songwriting eventually took her to Nashville, where she founded the successful Born To Cook show along with Grammy winner Gillian Welch. Gillian penned the song "I Don't Want To go Downtown" and debuted it at one of the shows, but never recorded it. Lynn does a piano version of it on her new album, Ghost In The Bed. While in Nashville, Lynn recorded an EP with producer Brad Jones (Josh Rouse, Jill Sobule) and one of the songs on it "Open Road" would go on to win the songwriting contest at Merlefest in North Carolina.

She has included a piano version of that song on Ghost In The Bed also, which was recorded in La Crosse WI, and co-produced with Grammy winning mastering engineer Brett Huus (Bill Miller, Cedar Dream Songs). She currently lives in La Crosse where she continues multi-tasking as a singer /song writer, piano, voice and classroom music teacher, choir director, and harmonium player in the Coulee Celtic Band.

Singer Songwriter Lynn Biddick released her 4th Record "Ghost in the Bed" on the newly formed "Momentous Records" The Record which is available at www.momentous-records.com has 12 songs, 11 of which were penned by Biddick. The 12th tune is a previously unrecorded song by Grammy winning Nashville pal, Gillian Welch.

Joyce: Lynn, how did you get involved in the music business?

Lynn: Both my Grandparents played music in some way. My Grandmother played in Livingston, Wisconsin. She was the silent movie piano player lady. (we both laugh) My parents are great appreciators of music. I started playing at 5, I was a musical nerd all the way through. I went to school for music. It was always what was easy for me.

Joyce: You moved from Wisconsin to Boston to Nashville back to LaCrosse, Wisconsin. What was this like?

Lynn: Straight out of school, I played my music on the street making my money that way. It seemed romantic at the time. Sooner or later we went inside. I plugged away in New England writing until about 1992. That's when I decided to go to Nashville. Writing has always been the thing that moved me the most. I was in bands in Boston, Rock Bands and I had my own little Lynn Biddick coffee house thing going. I went to Nashville because I heard there was a songwriting community there. I have followed this dream my whole life but it hasn't made a whole lot of financial sense to me. (laughs)

I stayed in Nashville for 9 years. I met Gillian Welch early on and we became friends. We started a show called, "Born to Cook"; a woman's songwriting show. Gillian became very successful and very busy, so we invited other women into the show. I ran the show for years in a little downtown club called, "Windows" on the Cumberland. I talked to producers and wanted to be a staff writer writing country music. It took me awhile to figure out that this is not what I really wanted to do.

In Nashville I also did tons and tons of writers nights and "writers in the round". I did many of them, including some at the Bluebird Cafe. I felt like I was writing and then testing the songs out all of the time. Nashville is SUCH a rarified place for that. People there care about songs! And they really really listen to every word and it is a great challenge for a new song. My time there was extremely important to my growth as a writer.

Another thing that happened while I was in Nashville was that I connected with the very small world of professional mountain dulcimer players. David Schnauffer was the leader of that pack and he passed away several years ago. But I transcribed CDs of dulcimer music that became 2 different dulcimer books- one by David and one by another excellent player named Lee Rowe. At the time when I met those guys I was a rare bird in town who played dulcimer myself and had familiarity with that instruments, but also had the skills to transcribe and write (by hand, I might add) the music down. It was nice, paying work.

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I came back from Nashville having been pretty "dulcimer focused." And I went back to school here to finish an ed degree, and I ended up at a school here that had many 1900's era Steinway pianos that they were in the process of restoration, one by one. I was playing some of them regularly, and these are really great instruments. It threw me back into my love of the piano, which has been a love since I was a small kid. So...some of the songs on my Ghost in the Bed CD were written on piano, of course. But some were written on dulcimer, and I rearranged some of those for piano, just because I thought it would be fun. I write on both instruments, but what seems to be happening more and more is that I write something on one and then take it over to the other one. And most often it has been dulcimer to piano.

Joyce: Do you prefer to write music or perform?

Lynn: I enjoy doing both of them. I'm getting more comfortable as a performer as I've aged. I always wanted to do the performing piece, maybe even more than the writing.

Joyce: Where do you perform at?

Lynn: I'm starting to get around the state, just locally, I'm figuring out where to go. I do a lot of "hired gun" kinds of playing and singing that gets no public recognition (fine with me) that doesn't fit into my "LynnBiddick.com" zone of business. But nonetheless it is musical work that pays and for which I am grateful. I get hired to play the piano for all kinds of things. I sing variously, sometimes in a spectacular hired choir for special religious events. I play harmonium in a Celtic band here in town and we are out in a pub every week, aside from playing gigs pretty steadily in the region.

So I'm kind of an artistic chameleon with lots of skills and I'm probably trying to do too many things at once. But that seems to be how I "do" my art. The one thing stimulates the other thing, and on and on. I'm enjoying the process. We will just see where it all goes.

Joyce: Your song, "Devil's Lake", did that come from the actual Devil's Lake in Wisconsin?

Lynn: Yea, I've been to Devil's Lake a number of times. I actually learned how to swim there. I kept driving past the sign in my travels, so between the sign and the lake, that's how the song came about.

Joyce: Any advice to women looking into getting into the music business?

Lynn: Be sure that you love it, be creative and be positive!

Joyce: What are some future personal goals?

Lynn: I'd like to do more and more performing. I'm working on my next CD as we speak.

Joyce: One last question. If you had an opportunity to perform with anyone, whom would you pick?

Lynn: Joni Mitchell.

Joyce: Thank you Lynn. Good Luck Lynn in your music career.

Lynn: Thank you.

Check out Lynn at www.lynnbiddick.com or contact Lynn at: lynnbiddick@earthlink.net

Story by: Joyce Ziehli
Photos supplied.

land. "It was neither fish, nor fowl," she says, and in her disillusionment with the process, Matraca waited three years to make another record. Even then, the results were disheartening. Measured by its artistry alone "Sunday Morning to Saturday Night" was a brilliant piece of work. Released in 1997 on Rising Tide Records, it contained one of Berg's most memorable songs, "Back When We Were Beautiful," a haunting ballad about a woman growing old. I guess you had to be there, she said.

She handed me a yellow photograph and then said, see this was my greatest love, my one and only love and this is me back when we were beautiful, see.

It was a magical moment when Matraca sang the song at the CMA

Awards, and for people who were there it was hard to imagine that she wouldn't be a star. She looked so beautiful, for one thing, with her long brown hair and large, dark eyes and the trace of a smile both confident and shy. But it was her voice that people remembered that night, so silky and strong and so full of heart. "Matraca Berg nearly stole the CMA Awards," declared Entertainment Weekly. But her song never made the country charts, for almost as soon as the album was released, Rising Tide Records went bankrupt. "I definitely wondered about my record karma," she says looking back. "I also felt like maybe you get signals you are barking up the wrong tree." But if she grew ambivalent about recording, she was more and more committed to the art of writing songs. And on that front there was no ambiguity about her success. The string of number ones that began in the '80s continued through the '90s with songs like "Hey, Cinderella" that she wrote with Suzy Bogguss and "Wrong Side of Memphis" that she wrote for Trisha Yearwood.

Measured commercially, or even by its critical acclaim, her biggest hit came in 1997. Nashville artist Deanna Carter, for her debut release, chose Matraca's "Strawberry Wine," one of the most personal songs that she ever wrote. It's a steamy ballad of teenage love, and the story it tells is mostly her own. He was working through college on my grandpa's farm. I was thirsting for knowledge and he had a car. The song is set on a Wisconsin farm, the family homestead of her adoptive father, Ron Berg,

where Matraca often spent her summers as a child. Dairy cattle grazed on the rolling hillsides, and corn grew tall in the cool summer breeze, and the warmth and love of extended family left a deep imprint on her songs. The same was true of her roots in Kentucky, the hills and hollows near the village of Wallins, where her family had lived since the days of Daniel Boone, and where at the age of 12 she would play piano at her grandmother's church. Songs like "Appalachian Rain," which she recorded with Emmylou Harris, and "Strawberry Wine" - which, in addition to the obvious story of passion, speaks of the bitter-sweet passage of time - stamped Matraca in the estimation of her peers as a songwriter at the very top of her game. She won a CMA Award for "Strawberry Wine," has written eleven number one hits, and in 2008 at the age of 44, became one of the youngest members of the Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame. "Matraca has the gift," says her friend and mentor Bobby Braddock, "and she's smart enough to know what to do with it."

But for all of her success in the songwriting realm, there was still the nagging pull of the studio, the feeling that she had never quite gotten it right. "I felt like I was an imposter," she says. But Suzy Bogguss and Gretchen Peters didn't see it that way. On recent tours of the United Kingdom, where the three singer-songwriters shared the stage, they urged Matraca to make a new record. She already had the material, they said, and Matraca had to agree that it was true.

With Gary Harrison she had written "Oh Cumberland" and "The Dreaming Fields," two songs that carried her back to her roots, and with Marshall Chapman, "Your Husband's Cheatin' on Us," based on a tongue-in-cheek short story by Jill McCorkle. But perhaps most powerfully, she had teamed with Troy Verges and Sharon Vaughn to write "South of Heaven," a song that began to take shape in her mind when her brother-in-law shipped off to Iraq. "His mother was coming apart," says Matraca. "She had this deep, heart-breaking fear in her eyes. She was pale all the time."

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