

The Songmill: Mary Ellen Casey's Ordinary Day



Little Rhody is a tiny state, but I am willing to bet we have more songwriters per capita than any other. Afloat this summer in our vast pool of dedicated and talented singer songwriters is Mary Ellen Casey.

Mary Ellen is not new to songwriting. She has been writing and performing for years. Like many local songwriters trying to support themselves or supplement their income, she performs a hearty mix of her own compositions along with well-known songs by nationally known artists. Her latest and second commercially released CD of original music, *Ordinary Day*, showcases how beautiful and pleasant her original music really is.

Similar to the rich vocal styling of Anne Murray, Mary Ellen's strong, yet smooth voice is perfectly suited for, and carries well, the songs she has selected for this CD.

On first listen, the songs appear to be light with very pop memorable and melodic refrains. Digging in deeper, though, you will hear much more. Between the soft lines of her lilting voice lies an undercurrent of deeper meaning - a soul searching for itself.

The album, dedicated to her soul mate, leads with an up-tempo number "The Love of Her Life" - a quest for someone looking for, and finding, that special someone. Several cuts in this collection laud those who have stayed together through the thick and the thin of it all and come out shining. Probably the finest song on the album is, "You Love Me Anyway" - a passionate and honest reflection on the strengths, weaknesses and differences that hold a couple near and dear. If you buy just one single from this collection, "You Love Me Anyway" would be this reviewer's pick.

Just when you think the CD only shines a light on love, Mary Ellen's out celebrating with her mates on "Paddy O'Hara," a sprightly number that has the listener leaving their troubles behind as they step through the doors of their local pub. "Paddy O'Hara" celebrates the Irish in us all as we tip a pint or two and toast good friends.

Recorded at Lakewest Recording and produced by Jack Gauthier, the album is a strong, comfortable listen with Duke Robillard backing Mary Ellen on lead guitar and Mark Teixeira moving things along with some tasty rhythms.

The album, all in all, is a salute to the hard working gal/guy. On "Ordinary Day," you are encouraged to call in a "well-day" from work and simply enjoy a walk about your own town. The title cut, "I Would Love You Despite Of," takes another look at that couple who despite working hard, carrying a multitude of family responsibilities and the weight of the world on their shoulders, push through and endure. "This Lady" is a tad sad, yet a reminder of how we all feel at times, as we struggle to juggle what life

throws at us while trying to find peace, acceptance and a higher purpose in life.

“Bathroom Trash Blues” is a cute tribute to her pup’s trash-pickin’, incurable blunders. The final cut, “New England Town,” captures what it means to be home – a songwriter’s blessing for all she values. It is a beautiful closing number acknowledging those who have come before us and the gifts we’ve been given.

Make a songwriter happy this week by buying a CD, downloading a tune or two, or shutting down that Facebook and going to listen to some original music – maybe even Mary Ellen Casey, on August 17, from 11am to 2pm at Java Madness in South Kingston. Learn more about Mary Ellen by visiting www.maryellencasey.com