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NO PLACE LIKE HOME

The journey of musician and
singer/songwriter Liz Fulmer

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Liz Fulmer is a musician, singer, performer, and songwriter who—despite her travels—has found her way home to Lancaster.

No Place Like Home

As we chat over coffee, Liz Fulmer tells me she wishes we could switch roles. Her journey has pulled her in many directions—to Boston, New York, New Zealand and back again—and it's safe to say that things are coming full-circle. Sitting back in her home county of Lancaster—where she grew up, earned her degree in English, began her career and most recently, got married—Liz has found a home, and an audience, right back where she started.

You may know her from routine stints at Lancaster's most popular music venues, or perhaps when she caught Lady Gaga's attention during a performance back in 2014 (Liz says it's "old news," but that it none-the-less served as a "wake-up call" for a career that had stalled). Today, she's reflecting on where everything began.

"I very distinctly remember going to see *Wicked* and at the end of the show, pointing and yelling, 'Someday I'm going to be there,'" she said. "It just always came so naturally." She went on to explain that "music was sort of a through-line," and that she always felt drawn to it. "We change and find different interests as we grow, but music was always the one thing that resonated the most with me."

Despite her passion, she recalls how nerve-wracking it was to get started. "Somebody heard [my music] through a Myspace account I had and asked if I wanted to play at *Senorita Burrita*," she said. "I had wanted to perform but didn't have the confidence to book shows." In 2015, she would begin recording her debut EP *Tall Tales*, followed by a full-length album of faith-based songs in early 2016 called *Heaven Knows*. Though she would eventually make a name for herself as a performer, it was in writing that her career really began.

For a year, Fulmer attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she says she really grew as a songwriter. Unfortunately, the high tuition was enough of a reason to spend the next year in New York. In a moment of serendipity—or perhaps fate—it was there that she met singer Zack Dobbins while waiting tables in Chelsea. They formed a friendship and ended up performing together at a cabaret club called the Metropolitan Room.

Their musical relationship has grown into a current collaboration for a 15 song album conceptualized by Dobbins about the important women in his life. Fulmer writes the songs and Dobbins arranges them for a string quartet and his vocals. Their goal is to return to the Metropolitan Room, where they'll play the songs live.

One of the things that's most remarkable about Fulmer is her natural ability to transition from secular to faith-based music. Whether she's leading a worship service at Grandview United Methodist Church or entertaining a small crowd at a local pub, her songs deliver honest observations of people and relationships.

"It's just two different hats," Fulmer says of existing in both worlds. "Both are comfortable. And I enjoy each for different reasons." After touching on drinking as a motif in her songwriting, with lyrics like "daily bread and some Johnny Red," Fulmer describes coming of age in the Catholic Church.

"I had some questions, especially being gay. But, luckily, whenever I brought up those questions to teachers or even to a priest, the response I got was always pretty okay. There was never anybody who said, 'you're going to go to hell.' I didn't get that experience."

Not only is Fulmer thankful to have been born in a place that supports and celebrates her voice, but also she's excited to cultivate friendships with other musicians in various projects, benefit concerts and collaborations. Most recently, she can be seen taking a seat behind the drum kit for the Dimestore Dolls, a local rock trio featuring fellow former Berklee student Kelly Buchanan and Lavacave bassist Donna Volles.

"Lancaster is really welcoming," says Fulmer. "I think right now we're supporting all kinds of music and all kinds of food and art. That's why it's really exciting to be here and I'm not trying to go back to New York or look into the West Coast. It's just a really awesome town to be in."

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Even after years of playing the area's best live music venues with nimble guitar skills and a golden voice at her command, Fulmer admits to still feeling those nerves before taking a gig. Regardless, she says she's lucky to have the opportunity, especially when friends in larger cities struggle to find an audience in markets so saturated with talent. With a bright vision for the future, she's moving forward with a growing momentum, fan-base, and... coffee. *Lots of coffee.* ☕

