

NIGHT LIFE

Kim Fontaine: Morning Pages by Mark Behrend

Debut CD Release

Kim Fontaine sits back in a comfy leather chair and smiles as we listen to the tracks from her debut CD "Morning Pages." It's a labour of love that's come from twenty plus years of paying her dues as a rock musician and songwriter. She says she's come a long way from those days as a wide-eyed Saskatoon teenager trying to make it in Toronto in the early eighties.

"A friend of mine I'd gone to high-school with was in an all-girl rock band in Toronto.

She convinced me to come out and play bass with them. I had a little bit of money and when I got there, their band had already broken up. I spent about three or four months out there and tried to get another band going. I practically starved. I sponged, I lived on peoples' couches."

Fontaine says she finally called her folks who sent her a plane ticket home. She was happy, content, started working in a restaurant, and then came the phone call.

"It was this band called "Legal Limits" originally from New Brunswick but based out of Toronto who were looking for a female bass



Kim Fontaine

player. They needed a companion for their female singer who didn't want to be the only girl in an otherwise all-guy band. I was adamant. I wasn't going to go out there. But they offered me a retainer, like a salary and gave me a stand-by return plane ticket to come home anytime I wanted. So I went out for a six-week stint. That turned into five years. We toured all over Ontario, Eastern Canada, and the Maritimes. We became like a family."

Fontaine says one of the biggest thrills for her

came early with the band when an independent producer brought them down to Boston to Blue Jay Recording Studios.

"They brought in producer Harry King and engineer Mike Gueleb, both of these guys had worked with Aerosmith. So here's this little 18-year-old girl from Saskatchewan winding up in this big recording studio with these big-name pros. For me that was overwhelming"

Fontaine says the band recorded an EP which was going to be released. But the deal fell through. She says it was disheartening but she

learned a lot about the record industry and how negotiations work. Eventually the band did release an EP that got airplay in Europe. But after five years, the band was burning out. Fontaine says people wanted to do other things. That's when she came back to Saskatchewan and decided to go to university. Fontaine had been doing a little writing during her time in Toronto, some jingle work and such. She says doing a degree in English really helped her hone her craft.

"My time at the U of S, learning the language and studying poets like Coleridge, Wordsworth and others really inspired me in terms of songwriting. But I'd also have to say even early on musicians like Nancy Wilson from the band Heart influenced me. They were the rock women every little girl wanted to be."

And those influences can be heard in Fontaine's debut CD Morning Pages. It's a courageous step for Fontaine who admits for most of her career she's been a sideman with bands. But spurred on by encouraging words of support from local musicians, and with the help of long-time friend, musician and recording engineer Neil Meckelbourg and other industry pros, Fontaine's two-year labour of love has come to fruition. The tracks play like pieces of a puzzle that represent her life. Empathy, dependence, healing, confidence, Fontaine is willing to dig down deep and bare her soul. The result is an honest, intimate, emotional ride that anyone who's "been there" can relate to.