

Melissa Brett • *The Butterfly Ball*

"The Effect, it speaks of winds that shift, of mighty ocean symphonies / All because of one small thing..."

The butterfly effect, also known as the chaos theory, hypothesizes that something as small as the flap of a butterfly's wing can cause significant changes in the earth's atmosphere and the absence of such can alter history.

This premise is not lost on Melissa Brett, whose latest release, the 10-track self-penned "The Butterfly Ball," applies this simple theory to the more complicated subject of love.

The opening title track illustrates with refreshing optimism that something seemingly innocuous can make a lasting mark on another person and even the world. From there, much like the magnificent creature which it attributes, "The Butterfly Ball," goes through the musical metamorphosis of the life of a relationship — the innocent beginning ("High," "A Love We Won't Forget"), finding balance ("Candy Morning June"), loss and disappointment ("Better to Love and Lose," "The Trouble with Fate"), hope for something better ("Above this Fallen Sky"), and, for the truly fortunate, coming out irreversibly changed ("My Journey Home").

"Recently I gained a much deeper understanding of the whole *love* thing," the singer-songwriter says. "The record ended up documenting the entire evolution of that experience, some of it planned, some not. It focuses on the struggles and freedoms of the heart...and of life in general."

Melissa's life has always been centered on music. As a child, she would assemble musical productions in her backyard for a small audience of her parents and other family and friends. With maturity came broadened horizons, leading Melissa to perform in regional musical theater, classical training at Auburn and the University of Tennessee, and later teaching music to all ages.

In 2000, Melissa made the move to Nashville where she worked as a demo singer on Music Row and polished her songwriting and performing skills at some of Music City's most famous venues, including the Bluebird Café and the Wildhorse Saloon. She appeared as a guest on Nashville's segment of the national showcase "Chick Singer Night," and opened for mainstays like Montgomery Gentry and Marvin Hamlisch.

Melissa released her self-produced debut album "Exposed" in 2005, garnering positive reviews from respected *Music Row* critic Robert K. Oermann and Paige Travis of Knoxville's popular entertainment publication *Metro Pulse*.

With her sophomore effort, produced by Melissa and Dex Green (Collective Soul, Rebecca Lynn Howard), "The Butterfly Ball" cuts through typical mellow, girl-with-a-guitar Americana to establish Melissa as a progressive pop/rock force on the independent Nashville music scene.

And like the butterfly effect asserts, even a small force is sometimes all it takes.

"At the Butterfly Ball with a pair of wings you, you can never ever fall / Come on baby take your chance / Everybody gets to dance."



For more information, including tour dates, events and more, visit www.MelissaBrett.com.

Melissa Brett • The Butterfly Ball

The City Paper

Knoxville NEWS SENTINEL

UT grad to perform at Disc Exchange

BY MARTI DAVIS
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University of Tennessee graduate and former West Knoxville Melissa Brett, a singer and songwriter now based in Nashville, will perform selections from her new album, "Exposed," in a concert at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Disc Exchange on Chapman Highway in South Knoxville.

Produced and written by the artist, selections on her debut recording range from feisty, alternative rock sounds to intimate ballads and light tracks with a soulful style. From "Fade," with its contemporary take on old-school, sexy funk, to "Unconditional," a catchy song with a laid-back groove, "Exposed" reflects Brett's artistry as a singer, instrumentalist and songwriter.

before moving to Nashville.

When she's not writing songs and performing at night or on weekends, Brett works as community-relations manager for the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

She said her music is heavily influenced by Bonnie Raitt, Melissa Etheridge, Bob Seger, Jackson Browne, Carole King, Trisha Yearwood, and even such classical composers as Verdi. She usually writes at the piano, but also plays electric and acoustic guitar.

Her album can be purchased at Disc Exchange or from her Web site, www.melissabrett.com.

Marti Davis may be reached at 865-584-5234.



University of Tennessee choral music graduate Melissa Brett, now a singer-songwriter living in Nashville, will perform songs from her latest album 2 p.m. Saturday at the Disc Exchange.

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THEATER REVIEW

Women command the stage in arts festival

BY AMY STUMPEL
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Talk about turning lemons into lemonade.

When Maryanna Clarke, artistic director of the Tennessee Women's Theatre Project, sustained a serious back injury last year, she thought it might mean the end of a promising season for the fledgling theater company.

"We had just made a nice splash with *Nickel & Dimed* when I hurt my back," said Clarke, who founded the company in 2005. "I was flat on my back for 10 weeks — it was just awful. Worst of all, we had already booked the theater for another show in May 2007. I knew that I was not physically able to handle a full production, but I didn't want people to forget about us either. Unwilling to give up her dream, Clarke began brainstorming other ways to continue on."

"I started thinking that there must be other women out there with work to share who might not have the resources to get it on stage. I sent out the call and had 50 replies almost immediately. I knew we were on to something."

Thus the Women's Work Festival was born. The theater festival showcased a wide range of performances, providing an unusual treat for arts enthusiasts.

"We were so pleased with the response, and knew we had to make this an annual event," Clarke said.

This year's celebration includes another impressive line-up of talent,

including poetry and dance, music and film. Local favorite Carolyn German will be on hand to present a staged reading of her new musical *Nashville* — *The Music City Musical*. And singer-songwriters Melissa Brett, Connie Hutto and Shirley Rutland will present an evening of music.

including p film. Local will be on reading of — *The Music* songwriter Hutto and an evening Other fi

What: TWTF's Second Annual Women's Work Festival
Where: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. on Sundays through May 25
Where: 2, Alexander Lacy Theater, 281 Ross I, Paris Blvd.
Cost: \$5 per ticket, \$25 for festival pass
Info: 681-7220, twtf.org

ley-Herrera, and graphic designer Amy Orlert will also be on display in the lobby for the run of the festival.

"It's exciting to see so much variety," Clarke said. "That's one of the reasons I started the Tennessee Women's Theatre Project. I've always said that if the theater holds up a mirror to society, where are all the women? We represent the majority of the population, but that's not the case in the theater. That's why we're here. That's our mission — to give voice to women through theater arts." □

Melissa Makes Good

Nashville ain't the only place a girl can pick up a spellbinding Southern drawl. Though her family relocated several times throughout her childhood, Melissa Brett calls Knoxville home, crediting the town with strengthening her resolve to pursue a career as a country singer. The brunette picked up her master's degree in choral conducting from UT, teaching many a music class before moving to Nashville in 2000. There she won spots opening for Montgomery Gentry and Marvin Hamlisch, meanwhile establishing herself as a regular during songwriter and open mic nights. Just this week she hosted the release of her debut CD *Exposed* at Nashville mainstay 3rd and Lindsley.

Though Brett doesn't shy away from opening her mouth wide to let out a great, quivering note, each of the 12 songs on her album reveal a host of insecurities, worries and heartbreaks. Penning each of the ballad-y, heartfelt songs herself, she also plays piano and acoustic guitar on the album—to be expected, we suppose, from a woman who was named after the sweetest of Allman Brothers songs. Brett's CD may be purchased at Disc Exchange and accessed online at www.melissabrett.com.

—Paige M. Travis, Ellen Mailernee

Knoxville's Weekly Voice
METRO PULSE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS
NEWS CENTER

Rock and Roll is Live at IUPUI; Summer Course Offers Live Concerts, Music Industry Speakers

INDIANAPOLIS—A new class at IUPUI this summer offers rock-and-roll concerts as homework; Billboard Top 40 charts for class discussions of current events; and popular music artists, songwriters and radio personalities as classroom speakers and performers.

"Rock and Roll: LIVE," or MUS 2320. X597, involves students in live concerts, guest lectures and guided listening activities as they explore popular music from various aspects of performance, marketing, writing and production.

Guest speakers/performers for the three credit hour course, taught by music Professor Jennifer Sterling, include Nashville songwriters Melissa Brett and Marc-Alan Barrette, and Dog Talk, a local band that will perform in class July 15. Out-of-pocket expenses include discounted tickets to Chicago at the Verizon Wireless Music Center and Train at the Marat.

The IU School of Music has offered a history of rock and roll class, "but we wanted something where students would experience popular music instead of just reading about it," Sterling said. "People aren't going to believe they are going to earn credit from having so much fun."

The class, offered for the first time this summer, meets from 1–3:15 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays through August 11. It is an elective for any student taking classes on the IUPUI campus, including those involved in the IUPUI music minor program.

"This is a real practical class for many students who want to go into music, especially the business and performing side," Sterling said.

"Back in the 50s as long as you had enough passion, you could make it. Today producers advance \$500,000 for a record. That puts a lot of pressure on artists. You have a producer, publicist and manager. It's not people sitting and making tapes anymore."

During the course of their studies, students will listen to weekly top hits along with dozens of oldies, including Elvis Presley's "All Shook Up," The Beatles, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," Aretha Franklin's R-E-S-P-E-C-T, and Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" and "Thriller."

Her students will study in-depth what goes into the making of a hit, comparing the oldies with current Top 40 listings, said Sterling, who holds a doctorate degree in music theory from the University of Maryland.

On-campus class sessions will be held either in the Mary Cable Building, located on the corner of Blackford and Michigan streets, or in Lilly Auditorium, located on the lower level of University Library.

Tomorrow
12th & Porter: A Lil' Bit of This and a Lil' Bit of That featuring Mista D with Jody Raffoul and Ashley Clark, 9pm, \$5, 21+.
23rd Psalm Cafe: Open mike jam session; Diner, 9pm, \$5.
Fluid Ounces and Glossary,
... Bar & Grill: The Roadmasters, 8pm; Feb, 9:30pm, \$7.

The Pond: Billy London and the Bel Airs, 9:30pm, \$5.
Puckett's After Hours (Franklin): Tim Rushlow, Danny Orton and friends, 7pm dinner, 8:30pm show, \$29.95 (includes dinner and show).
Radio Cafe: Balhogg & The Rutherford County Stumblers with Mike Schoenfeld and Zac Bryant, 9pm, \$5.
Rhythm Kitchen: Joey Richey and friends, 7pm, cover TBA.
Rippy's Smokin' Bar & Grill: Tom Stewart



Melissa Brett will play a CD release party at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at 3rd & Lindsley.

THE TENNESSEAN