A Small Town Girl At Heart:

Sheena Grobb’s Interview with Patti Hacault

PH: Would you call yourself a singer, musician and songwriter and literary performer first, second, etc. In what order would you list your multi-talented repertoire and why?

**SG: I guess if anything, I'm a songbird first.  I've had the longest relationship with my voice - singing from the moment I could make sounds - and when I sing, I am most at home.  Songwriting and expressing myself through words, phrases, themes, and concepts would come next.  I find great purpose, joy, and even a healing quality to the creative process.  My place as a musician - playing the piano, guitar, and now the harp - has always felt more like a tool... a vehicle... for my creative and emotional expression. I gratefully use what skills I have to convey what I'm intending to.**

PH: Would you classify yourself as what type of singer (folk, ballad, pop, country, etc.)

**SG: My last two albums would most appropriately fall into the category of folk/pop.  I'm hoping to stay away from personally putting myself in any particular "box" though... I want to feel free to express authentically in any form.  Who knows what that will look like in the future.  For now, this type of music resonates most with where I'm at.**

PH: Which musical instrument plays within your soul?

**SG: Any and every instrument played *with* soul.  Right now, the harp is my newest experience, and I'm feeling very connected to it.**

PH: When writing how do you come up with ideas for your songs? Do you rely of life’s lessons, etc.?

**SG: Historically, anything that was upsetting me (mostly unconsciously) would come up naturally in my songwriting.  I've spent a lot of time over the past few years looking at what's really been bothering me under the surface, and it's showing up less and less in my songs.  I guess I'm also now aware of where a song is coming from when it evolves.  Am I thinking this song into existence?  Am I feeling it?  Is this a spiritual or soul expression?  Or somehow a combination?**

PH: Have you always known this is what you were destined to do? If not, was there any one specific situation that gave focus to your future goals.

**SG: On some level, I always knew music was meant to play a part for me.  I was aware of the undeniable way I felt when I would sing... write a new song... share with a new person or group.  I was also aware of the reactions and responses I was receiving from others... that they were receiving something as well.  However, debilitating feelings of inadequacy would prevent me from following it further, and absolutely there were a number of important individuals who provided the encouragement and support I needed to check it out.  They were my vision carriers when I couldn't carry the vision on my own.  The Winnipeg Folk Festival and my first management team (Mark and Michael Glucki and Lou O'Brien Moran) helped me get the ball rolling with my first EP - an initial jump start I will be forever grateful for.  My most recent support network (Kim Nozick, Darryl Anderson, and Jeff Golfman) played an invaluable role in helping me establish a business and experience of what it means to work as a team while releasing my latest full length album (co-produced with Dan Donahue).  Possibly the most significant impact on my development over the past four years has been through the emotional work I've done with Kim and Dr. Doug Tataryn.  We've looked at processing and updating unconscious (emotional) impressions that were preventing me from truly showing up in the world.  Without a doubt, this work was life changing for me - let alone career changing.**

PH: Explain your passion for the “stage”. Why?

**SG: I'm not sure I have a passion for the stage. (Was that in my bio?  I should probably update that... or explain further... lol)  I do have a passion for sharing and experiencing music with others.  The stage can sometimes feel a bit isolating... but when I get a few songs into a performance, and I start to feel the crowd's response... and our "relationship" begins to develop so to speak... there's nothing like it.  Whether that's happening between two people, on a stage, or in a living room... it's a beautiful, connecting, and sometimes even healing experience. That - I have a passion for.**

PH: You have played with some major name on the music scene. Does any one specific performer of mentor stand out?

**SG: Opening for Andy Stochansky back in 2005 will always stand out for me.  He was my mentor through the Winnipeg Folk Festival's Young Performers Program, and he gave me my first professional "gig".  I opened for him at the West End Cultural Centre.  It was a pretty crazy, wonderful experience - I was over the moon!!  Getting to play to 17 000 people a year later at the Winnipeg Folk Festival... a "tweener" between the Wailin' Jennys and Bedouin Soundclash...  that was also unforgettable.**

PH: You have several nominations. Which ones have more meaning, or more impact on your future as an entertainer?

**SG: I would say being nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award had the greatest impact on me as an entertainer.  The WCMAs are simply well established and collectively acknowledged by the music community/industry.  Being nominated by the Winnipeg Folk Festival for a Winnipeg Arts Council Awards in the category of "On The Rise" also meant a lot.  I'm honestly not sure how it all affects my future as a performer, though.  It certainly feels good to be recognized for my work... and it definitely helps to build credibility within the industry... but awards and nominations are mostly like a pat on the back.  I accept the "nod", and continue on my way.**

PH: How does it feel to perform to large crowds?

**SG: Not entirely different from playing to smaller ones.  I find it a little more isolating... and that's ok.  There are often really bright lights so I can't see the crowd... but I can feel it. The bigger the audience... or the bigger the moment... the more grounded I feel.  I know I've got a job to do... and I just do it.  No time to be in my head.  I'm completely heart centered in those moments, and I feel very spiritually connected.  It's beautiful!!**

PH: How many tour dates have you had to date.

**SG: Including house concerts and private events, a few hundred at this point I'm sure.  I've been all over Canada a number of times, and this year, my touring circuit has expanded to include parts of the UK and US.**

PH: Explain about sharing with us the satisfaction you would gain from hosting expressive song writing workshop.

**SG: I've really grown to appreciate the shared collective creation. I love facilitating a songwriting workshop where I am able to give others an experience they might not be able to have on their own.  Something unique and beyond my control always evolves.**

PH: Human rights advocate. Why do you voice an awareness of human rights.

**SG: I figured out early on that merely writing and performing songs would not on its own be enough for me.  I wanted to contribute something to society... to my community... and yes ultimately the world... that would alleviate suffering.  Human rights advocacy came into my life very naturally while I was going to University.  Opportunities continued to arise where my voice through music could be offered.  Over time my passion for raising awareness began to evolve towards alternative forms of healing and wellness that I wanted to be a part of encouraging.... raw food and emotional processing for starters.  I am often so gratefully aware of the platform music provides for this kind of education.**

PH: Explain about your new album? The thoughts and passion for the various songs and music scores and why?

**SG: "Grow" was a two year process... it was an album I recorded after a few really hard years of emotional processing.  A painful divorce, some significant health concerns, and a lot of reflection... all of it leading to an eventual evolution of consciousness that continues to send me soaring.  I wanted to honour that time with a collection of songs that represented much of my journey through it.  There's a lot of sadness in "Grow"... there's also a lot of life and honesty.**

PH: How do you feel your rural roots and family upbringing has played a role in your career choice?

**SG: My rural roots and family upbringing had less to do with my career choice and more to do with my ability to stay grounded within what can be (at times) a very narcissistic profession.  My Mom's love of music inspired and encouraged my sister and I to be playing music from the age of two years old.  Thanks to her, the building blocks started to take form early.  Fairly naturally, I began writing songs at ten years old.  But honestly, a career as a professional singer/songwriter/musician wasn't at all in our family vocabulary.  It wasn't something I was raised to do... but definitely something I believe I was destined to.  Having grown up in a rural community simply helps in so many ways when navigating through the world... not to mention the music industry.  Remembering the simple and important aspects of life seems a little easier out in the country.**  **And no matter where I go, I always remember where I'm from.**

PH: Future goals. Immediate and lets say five years down the road.

**SG: My immediate goal is to take some time over the next little while to... write.  I've spent the past few years recording and touring... it definitely feels like time to go inward.  I also hope to further explore the worlds of emotional processing, raw food, integral life, and other forms of health and wellness that interest me.  Over the next five years... hmmm.... who knows!!  I've learned to take one day at a time. In general, more of what has contributed to my awakening as a conscious human being... and less of what hasn't.**