

Emma Jacob

“Someone like Emma doesn’t come along very often.” The speaker is Karen Staley, a premier Nashville songwriter whose songs have been cut by Faith Hill, LeAnn Rimes and Reba McEntire, among many others. She first learned about Emma Jacob through a friend who heard her sing at a showcase. The friend told her that Emma was just a teenager but that she was doing an extraordinary version of one of Staley’s more challenging songs titled “With You.” The following week, a skeptical Staley met with Emma’s manager and listened to a live recording of the performance. “It brought tears to my eyes,” says Staley. “Not just anyone can sing it because of the vast range, but Emma wears it out. I was touched that someone so young could convey the sentiment so well.” the years she developed a powerful yet subtle voice and the ability wring emotion out of every line of a song. The rest – a passion for music and life, her charismatic stage presence, and her clear sense of purpose – are quickly evident to those who’ve come to know Emma in person.

Her debut CD on Black River Music Group, available exclusively on I-tunes will give the world its first look at a young woman who has been immersed in music since the days when she and her mother sang together while Emma was still in her high chair in Costa Mesa, California. She recalls listening to her mother’s Aretha Franklin records, and then hearing Patsy Cline, who set off a lifelong love of country music. Somewhere amid the elementary school chorus, holiday programs and karaoke CD’s at home, Emma’s parents figured out that she had a real gift. She took vocal lessons from the legendary Seth Riggs – she once ran into Ray Charles at a lesson – and earned a spot as first soprano in the Pacific Symphony Children’s Choir.

“I just heard ‘Georgia On My Mind’ on the car radio the week before I met Ray Charles,” she notes, “I had even commented to my parents that it is such an incredible song. Because I knew very little about Mr. Charles, they went on to tell me about him and the songs he had recorded during his career. So, it was truly an amazing moment when I walked into my vocal coaches offices for my weekly lesson and heard him say to me. ‘I would like to introduce you to Ray Charles, Ray this is Emma.’ I was floored and humbled as I shook this icon’s hand. It was a very sweet moment that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

She began performing at nearby county fairs, and then, at the age of 11, attended an L.A. audition for “Showtime at the Apollo,” turning her affinity for gospel music into a win and a trip to New York for the nationally broadcast TV show. She won over a skeptical crowd with Aretha’s “You’re All I Need To Get By” and earned a standing ovation. “It was one of the most memorable moments,” she says. “Really cool. That was pretty much when I thought, ‘I really want to do this. I really want to be a singer.’”

Her love of gospel and R&B competed with her love of country, but the latter emerged as her clear favorite. Those around her would often say, “‘You’re a natural country singer.’ I suppose it must have been my love for country music showing through. Country tells a story, and it can make you laugh or cry. It’s pretty much like a show in a three-minute song.”

In the meantime, she and her family moved to Colfax, California, to help her grandfather recover from surgery. He was about to sell a local theatre he owned unless she and her parents would take it over. They agreed, and Emma’s 13th birthday present was half ownership of the Colfax theatre. It would be the site of the performance that led Grammy-Award winning Producer Paul Worley (Martina McBride, Dixie Chicks) to urge that she give Nashville a shot.

Her recording experience in California had been minimal, so her first Nashville recording session, “was a little nerve-wracking,” she says, “but once we started, it was awesome.”

Her passions include creations of fashion designer Betsy Johnson (“I’ll go to her store every chance I get”) and anime’, the Japanese animation genre. In fact, animators developed an

anime' short that follows Emma's own adventures.

Nothing, though, holds the thrill of entertaining. "I love being on stage," she says. "I love to look back and see my band having a really good time, or to look at people enjoying themselves. It's pretty awesome." Concert promoter and venue owner Bill Fisher who booked Emma to open a show for Jason Aldean in Butte, Montana says, "Emma's performance was seasoned beyond her years...I was blown away by the power of her voice and what a natural she is on stage entertaining! I expect her to be back in this arena headlining soon.

During this last year Emma has traveled to the four corners of the country doing what she loves to do the most, sing and perform. One of the highlights of last year was opening for country music legend, Charlie Daniels. She says about the show, "I was so nervous, it is not every day you get to open for a legend...boy, was it fun, it is a show I will never forget".

Her voice and presence are as lovely and compelling as a butterfly, dazzling, vibrant and brilliantly colored, and her joy is as infectious as her music. "My job is to sing as well as I can and to entertain people," she says, "and who could ask for more than that? And, day-to-day, I don't sweat the small stuff, I pay attention to the big stuff, and I always reflect and remain grateful for all the good stuff."