

# BUZZ

Magazine

June, 2016

A Publication of Bay Buzz

DADDY KOOL  
RECORDS

A TRIBUTE TO  
THE BEATLES

UKULELE  
MADNESS

MUSICIANS  
MENAGERIE

ROSEWOOD  
CREEK

JCT 27:  
UKELEAR  
FUSION

THE TIME  
BANDITS

MAMA BONE'S  
FAREWELL

LAURA SHEPHERD  
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Photo by John Stalter

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Photo taken by Constance Hilton at  
Orange Blossom Jamboree 2014 at  
Sertoma Youth Ranch in Brooksville, Florida  
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# **BUZZ MAGAZINE**

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St. Petersburg/Tampa

[www.baybuzz.org](http://www.baybuzz.org)

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PUBLICATION**



Photo by Aramis Ikatu

## LAURA SHEPHERD MAKING MAGIC WITH MUSIC!

**Hi Laura, so what is keeping you busy these days?** Making music videos is something that brings me immense joy. I have a dozen or so. You can check them out on my YouTube channel, ILShepherd9. My goal is to try something different - the only rules are no girls laying on their back or leaning suggestively over. I have collaborated with people all around the world. I can't be in front of and behind the camera at the same time so I'm always looking for a partner in crime.

**How did you first get into music? Did you come from a musical family?** I did not come from a musical family. I took guitar lessons in the seventh grade, but it wasn't until I was 40 that I really decided to play and perform. Often people come up to me and say they wish they'd started playing when they were young - and they are still younger than when I started. Just remember today is a good day to start.

**What is the first song you wrote?** The first song I wrote was "The Grandpa Song". It is on my album, "The Stand".

**When you get an idea for a song, how do you go about it? What is your writing process?** I usually start with an interesting line; something someone has said or something will just pop out like "a handful of silver and a pinch of gold. I'll use it for tar on the roof of my soul". I don't even know what it means, but it makes for a good song. Then I have to write the song while playing an instrument. Otherwise, I end up with an a cappella song and no real gift for putting music behind it.

**How did you form "Ladies of St. Petersburg"? Tell us more about this group.** I was part of a group in Fredericksburg, Virginia called The Singing Ladies at the Burg. The idea is to pull people together for a specific performance. No long-term commitment. When I moved here I wanted to connect with other singers. So I started "The Singing Ladies of St. Petersburg". From time to time we get a group together for a performance or an event. The last one was the fundraiser at the Gulfport Casino for "The Gulfport Food Forest" which is a non-profit. I'm passionate about growing food bearing trees on public lands.

**Are you a full time working musician or is there another job you keep?** I do contract work sometimes by playing music. I do work in the film industry, although I will say the film industry is hurting here in Florida since our governor cut the tax incentives. All the work is moving to Georgia, but I am not. So there is less of that to do.

**How many instruments do you play?** I started as a guitar player. Then one Christmas, I brought home an old, free piano on the back of my truck and had some friends carry it up the stairs to my apartment. The stairs were steep and when we got to the top, the windowsill stuck out too far so we had to dismantle the window, with the piano three quarters of the way up. Now I play the mandolin because it's easy. In a hard shell case it is lighter than some women's purses. Truthfully, I am a songwriter and a storyteller.

**Tell us some of the places you have played out at. Which was your favorite and why?** I generally play where people want to listen to original music. St. Petersburg has Studio 620 which is a lovely environment for The Laura Shepherd Show. Festivals are also great venues because people are there to listen to music. Sometimes I travel to do a show. I just played a show in Fredericksburg, Virginia last May at a place called The Kenmore Inn. It is a fine listening room. It is my intention to make people feel so good that they want to share me with their friends.

**You're not shy. I've seen you start singing and playing your mandolin at parties when most people are talking. How did you overcome stage fight or was it something you never had? Would you have advice for those who do struggle with it?** When I first started playing out I was getting sick to my stomach before I left the house. To do one song at an open mic I would stand there shaking so badly that I could hardly play. But one can gain strength overriding fears. I still get nervous but practice looking confident and relaxed. My advice to others is it does not make me any less nervous if I tell lots of people that I'm very nervous.

**Where are you originally from?** I was born in Paris to American parents, but I lived most of my life in Virginia. I moved here in 2012 to take care of my mother when my father died.

**Let's talk about your CD, "The Stand". I find it very well written and it makes you happy to listen to it. Was this recorded in Florida? How long did it take to record? Plus you got to work with some other musicians on this project. Tell me, how did that go?** "The Stand" was recorded in Fredericksburg, Virginia at Wally Cleaver Studio. My very good friend Keith McConnell was instrumental in getting me started on the project. The wonderful thing about an album is you can pull together all kinds of people with varying schedules who could

...Laura Shepherd Continued...

never actually be in a band. I had a standing Monday night appointment at the recording studio with the agreement that we could cancel at the last minute if something came up. I wished and hoped that Jeff Covert would call and cancel because it is somewhat nerve racking and hard work to record an album. The funny thing is I looked forward to it all week until Monday. With this and that, it took about a year to record. And of course I have a soon-to-be released album. Look for a release party within the year.

[www.lshepherd9.com](http://www.lshepherd9.com)



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