

Summer Vacation

Sarah McLachlan and Lilith Roll Again / by ANDREA TRACE

When Nettwerk releases *Laws of Illusion* this month, it will be the first Sarah McLachlan CD of all new studio material in seven years. She has spent the intervening time raising her two children and getting grounded. "I've just been living my life, doing some charity gigs, being a mom.

"Having a bit of normalcy, whatever that means, you know, staying in one place... allows me to be a little more grounded and centered and calm at which point I can think about writing... I have two small kids and I want to be a mom. I don't want to miss anything. Kids are a great excuse."

But the domestic interlude will be interrupted this summer. "I'm going to be back with a vengeance," Sarah jokes. Her new album releases June 15th and Nettwerk CEO and Lilith Tour co-founder Terry McBride announced that a reenergized 2010 Lilith Tour will return, opening in Calgary on June 27th.

Laws of Illusion is a vibrant collection of 12 new songs that gave Sarah the opportunity to work through some recent changes in her life, including the break up of her 11-year marriage. "There's a lot of light and darkness on this record, and there's a sort of real raw energy (that) I haven't felt before," says Sarah.



When asked about the title of the new record, Sarah freely admits she likes the fact that it doesn't immediately make sense. She reveals that the title refers in part to the illusory versions of our lives that we make for ourselves- how we fantasize things will play out. If you've ever felt you had big chunks of your life worked out, organized and laid in front of you, then you know what she's talking about. Your illusion can be very strong until reality intrudes. "It defines you. It defined me to a large degree and I sort of had to go and pick up the pieces and figure out who I was at that point. The process of figuring that out was making this record."

Lilith Tour is back on the menu of summer shows because the timing felt right, the will and the ability to get the show happening was strong. "We can give it the energy it needs... make it bigger and better, more fantastic," enthuses Sarah.

This summer's Lilith Tour lineup includes both artists who have played the show previously and new artists, representing a wider variety of genres and talent than ever before. Hundreds of artists will play over the course of the tour including Kelly Clarkson, Sheryl Crow, Sugarland, Ke\$ha, The Indigo Girls, Tegan and Sara

(who played Lilith in 1999 on the Village Stage), Loretta Lynn, Emmylou Harris, Carly Simon, Heart, The Bangles, The Go-Gos and, of course, Sarah McLachlan.

In addition to the main roster, every market will feature a winning ourstage.com artist as Lilith goes looking coast to coast for the next best emerging female artist. The online competition this year combines two rounds of public votes with winners being determined by a final round of judging by ourstage.com and Lilith Tour officials. The recognition of burgeoning local talent has been a Lilith tradition from the first.

"It's fantastic. It's been really fun building on the legacy of this." With its stellar lineup and grassroots support, the 2010 Lilith Tour promises to be just as successful as were the groundbreaking 1997-1998 shows. Also new this year, there will be a two week stint in Britain and Europe.

"We got dubbed 'the white chick folk fest' which was really upsetting—we asked everybody!" Thanks in part to the economic success of previous Lilith Fairs, record labels and radio have been willing to support more women making a greater variety of music than ever before. "I think it really helped the industry recognize that women were a powerful force and we make great music." The 2010 Lilith Tour has an amazingly diverse roster. "They (artists) were a little quicker to say yes this time."

Speaking about the origins of Lilith, Sarah is candid. "I wanted to play some shows, but I didn't want all the responsibility on my shoulders. It basically came out of laziness."

The unwritten law at the time was that you couldn't have an all-female double bill; the industry consensus was that no one would go to the show. Similarly, it was accepted wisdom that you couldn't play two songs by women artists back-to-back on the radio. Sarah wanted to challenge the established status quo. "All the summer festivals that were out there at the time were completely male-dominated." A point needed to be made and Sarah stepped forward to make it.

"Up until that point, I had managed to live my career rather quietly. I wasn't in the tabloids—I still am not for the most part, thankfully. It was Lilith Fair that catapulted me into a different stratosphere as far as the media frenzy and public knowledge.

"And really, at the time, it seemed like 'Okay, this feels right, I can manage this now'—whereas if that had happened six or seven years previous, I don't think I would have been anywhere near ready. But because I was able to live my career quietly and have small successes and get used to things in that way, I think I was kind of ready for it."

An important part of every Lilith Tour has been the determination to "leave a positive social footprint wherever we went." In the past, a dollar from every ticket sold went to local women's shelters. Between them, the 1997-1998 Lilith Fairs raised over \$10 million for local and national charities.

This year, a portion of ticket sales will go to the Lilith i4c campaign. i4c (which stands for 'I foresee a better tomorrow') contributes to young companies with a so-called triple bottom line. TBL enterprises seek to reap a threefold benefit for their efforts: social, environmental, and financial, and thereby, over time, improve not only the economic but the social and environmental health of the global community.

And that fits right in with McLachlan's ethos. She feels music is a gift that allows her to connect with people. Witness her

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—SARAH MCLACHLAN



Laws of Illusion hits stores on CD and Vinyl June 15 from Nettwerk.

2004 video for "World On Fire," a telling exemplar of Sarah's global thinking. As Jon Pareles, writing in the *New York Times*, says, the video is "a modestly brilliant gesture: it stacks up budget items for a typical clip against what the same \$150,000 budget would buy as relief efforts—cattle, bicycles, housing, education, medicine...The contrast between show-business splurges and practical aid is startling"

"World On Fire" garnered a Grammy nominee for Best Short Form Music Video and cost only \$15 to make—the price of a Sony mini DV tape. The remainder of the \$150,000 video budget was distributed among eleven charitable organizations around the world including CARE, Engineers Without Borders, Help The Aged, Warchild, and Heifer International.

Not bad for a kid from Halifax. Sarah has sold over 40 million recordings worldwide, won three Grammy Awards, eight Juno Awards and many other distinctions. More than that, she has made a difference—through her music and her willingness to effect change.

"I never have set goals, in the sense that I expected to be successful or get to a certain place. My idea of success has always been, does it feel right? Does it feel good to me? Do I enjoy doing it? And somehow miraculously, I've been able to follow that path and have a great success at it.

"So this whole career, the life that I have, the opportunities that I've been given—it all comes as unexpected. Every day I pinch myself, you know? I can't believe all this has happened to me."

Laws of Illusion releases June 15 and includes the key tracks "Loving You Is Easy," "Illusions Of Bliss" and "Forgiveness." ▼