

BOMSHEL

Kristy began performing at the ripe old age of four in a group called Fiddler's Hatchery. "It was a really intense musical experience because we did summer camps and we toured through the U.S and Canada in the summer doing these big shows. It was a lot of fun. We got to play these really neat theaters and we did barn dances and all sorts of fun stuff."

Kristy's musical influences were varied and included everything from the Christian music her parents favored to Garth Brooks, Chris LeDoux and the music she listened to with her rodeo friends and then there was the cousin who introduced her to Heart, Def Leppard and Journey. "I listened to Heart over and over and over. I was so obsessed with them. Then I saw Garth and I said 'I want to do that. I want to be that,'" says Kristy, who moved to Nashville in 2002 and began writing songs and developing her vocal chops.

Kelley admits she had a few hardcore honky tonk ambitions when she moved to Music City—in addition to cutting hit records. "I was watching CMT and I saw Brooks & Dunn and I thought, "Oh my gosh! I just want to sit and have a beer with them. They just look like so much fun to hang out with' and that was my goal to move to Nashville and drink a beer with Brooks & Dunn," she says with a laugh, and admits B&D have been kind to the new female duo, offering advice and even serving up a little tequila.

Kelley and Kristy's vibrant vocals and enviable writing skills are earning them the respect of such heroes as Brooks & Dunn, and fans from coast to coast who have been touched by "Fight Like a Girl."

"Last year we went to Kristy's hometown in Idaho and played for this benefit called Celebrate Life in honor of Kristy's friend, Jenny, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at 26," says Kelley. "She was expecting a baby when she found out and they thought they were going to have to abort the baby because she had to go through chemo."

Jenny gave birth to her daughter, Grace, and fought the cancer for eight years, passing away shortly after her little girl's eighth birthday. "She said 'you guys inspire me' and I'm sitting there listening and thinking this is so backwards," says Kristy. "I was out running on the river and was really angry about the whole situation and the song title just came to me."

"I really wanted to gear it towards all women," says Kelley of how they crafted the song. "With our moms, sisters and grandmas and I've always really admired their persistence through the tough times. I think women have an amazing ability to endure. It's a positive thing to fight like a girl because girls are a lot stronger on the inside. We don't want to put one meaning on this song. We want people to take it however they want to take it. Whether they are a little girl or a woman struggling with something they really can't control. We don't want it to just be the cancer song because everyone has their own story."

In writing songs for their record, Kelley and Kristy were looking to share stories—things they'd lived or seen someone else live through. "It has to be something that we're really organically going through or a conversation that we've had with a fan or friend," says Kristy.

"Kristy and I are about as normal as it comes, so if it happens to us, it pretty much happens to everybody," Kelley says. "The other day I was trying to have a real serious conversation with Kristy and I said 'would you stop trying to write a song while I'm trying to talk to you?' She'll do that. I do it too sometimes."

Kelley says one of her favorite songs to sing is "Arizona." "We wrote that with Jack Sizemore," she recalls. "He asked me where I was from and I said 'back in Arizona' He said, 'that's a great title,' so we just wrote it. I wanted to put things that were really very Arizona and things that people in Arizona would know and recognize. We wrote that song in a half hour."

"Canoe" is a song inspired by Kelley's first date with her boyfriend. "I'd never been in a lake before and I was getting in the canoe and trying not to be prissy," she recalls with a laugh.

Both girls say "Love Me for Me" is the most personal track. The lyric about self-acceptance is a message they are happy to preach. "The song says 'I lose my keys and I'm constantly late/I'm comfortable if I'm a few pounds overweight/ I'm going to eat while I'm out on a date'" says Kristy. "That song is just like us talking and would be the most personal."

The girls are roommates and their house served as a songwriter's haven and as their studio for much of this record. "I love that I can do my own vocals because I'm a real control freak about my vocals," says Kelley. "The cool thing about it is our record sounds exactly how we wanted it to be."

Kristy says the atmosphere was always relaxed. "The first thing in the morning, we'd sit and get creative, get ideas and get these songs down and then we'd go upstairs and kind of lay down tracks," she says. "We'd live with it."

The result is a record that is honest and authentic, pulsating with energy and teeming with artistic integrity.

"Every song you hear it's going to be us," says Kelley. "You'll hear our fun side and our sad side. We have some really traditional country on there and some really *poppy* stuff."

"When you buy a Bomshel record, you are going to be bringing home a piece of the two of us," Kristy says. "All I can say is on this record I played as good as I could have possibly played. I sang as good as I could have possibly sung and Kelly sang as good as she could. It's a scary experience to now be putting it out there because it's definitely a piece of our soul."