

# katy tessman *singer - songwriter*

## *frequently asked questions*

**Q:** What would an audience member experience at one of your shows?

**A:** As a performer, I combine energy and emotion with warmth and humor; as a songwriter my approach is original and sincere. I play acoustic guitar and mandolin, and my performances often feature accompaniment by guitar, bass, and/or percussion. I've always loved being on stage, and I consider myself lucky to be able to perform my songs for audiences of all ages. ~ k.t.

**Q:** What are the topics of your songs?

**A:** My songs range in topic from celebrating life to manic depression, identifying the obstacle to dancing with my girlfriends, the northern woods of Minnesota to overcoming the fear of true love. I write from my heart; I use frank and honest lyrics that express many sides of the experiences and relationships that have shaped my life. ~ k.t.

**Q:** You have just released a CD, tell me about that.

**A:** My solo debut CD, *Fall*, includes 11 original songs. My acoustic-based arrangements have been expanded with a multi-textured band. Special guest performances are by legendary jazz and studio bassist Richard Davis, innovative funk drummer Clyde Stubblefield, violinist Randy Sabien and percussionist Wally Ingram. Recorded at Wakefield Mines studio in Madison, WI, I co-produced *Fall* with multi-instrumentalist Jay Moran and drummer/percussionist Dave Stanoch. ~ k.t.

**Q:** What started you to play guitar and write songs?

**A:** After graduating with a B.A. degree in Speech Communication from Minnesota State University Moorhead, I moved back to the Twin Cities to work in marketing and communications. It was a Christmas present from my parents, arriving on the Fourth of July in 1993, that started me to play the guitar. Living in a studio apartment in the uptown neighborhood of Minneapolis, I began writing songs inspired by artists such as Indigo Girls, James Taylor, 10,000 Maniacs (with Natalie Merchant) and Shawn Colvin. And to satisfy my craving to perform, I began playing in public venues. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Have you always performed as a solo artist?

**A:** No. Previous to going solo in 1997, I was the lead singer and songwriter in Joe's Elevator, an eclectic folk-rock band I co-founded in 1993. For four years, we performed in Twin Cities' coffeehouses and bars including The Loring, Ginkgo, Caboose and 400 Bar. During this time, I picked up the mandolin. You can hear several of my songs on the band's CD *Up & Down* released April 1997. I am very proud of our CD release concert – more than 400 people attended our celebratory event at The Fine Line Music Cafe and we sold over 100 CDs. Since the disband of Joe's Elevator, my solo career has blossomed. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Do you do any other musical performances or projects?

**A:** Yes. I perform backing vocals on several other musicians' recordings and special performances. I also sing in wedding ceremonies. I enjoy this work because it allows me to stretch my talents as an artist. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Where are you based and where do you perform?

**A:** I make my home, with husband and drummer/percussionist Dave Stanoch, in Minnetonka, a western suburb of Minneapolis, MN. From Mankato to Madison, Duluth to Decorah, I perform my original contemporary/urban folk songs at coffeehouses, bars, festivals and colleges in the Twin Cities and throughout the region. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Where did you grow up?

**A:** I grew up in Brooklyn Center, a northern suburb of Minneapolis, MN. I loved singing and dancing to my parents to 8-track recordings of Simon & Garfunkel, Jim Croce, and the Hair soundtrack. Some of my fondest childhood memories include my older sister and younger brother. We would put on musical shows for our parents, imitating Captain and Tenniel and The Carol Burnett Show. My parents are educators, so my family would spend our summer breaks together at our lake home in northern Minnesota. There, I learned to appreciate and respect Mother Nature at an early age. One of the first songs I wrote is a tune about this special family place called "Caribou." ~ k.t.

**Q:** Have you always been a performer?

**A:** Yes, but I haven't always been a performing contemporary/urban folk singer-songwriter. When I was a student at Robbinsdale Cooper High School, in New Hope, MN, I was cast in musical theater productions and studied voice. I continued my classical voice training and theater craft when I attended Minnesota State University, Moorhead. Even though my solo voice recitals were made up of opera, classical music, and show tunes, I enjoyed FM pop radio and I've always been attracted acoustic based music. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Why do you perform bare foot?

**A:** A few years ago, I performed at my uncle's surprise birthday party. It was a very casual, laid back show and I spontaneously kicked off my shoes. The next day, my sister told me I sounded better bare foot and strongly encouraged me to perform that way. Needless to say, I highly regard my sister's input on my sound. ~ k.t.

**Q:** Who does your booking and promotion?

**A:** I do – I like the business side of my music career. In 1998-99, I teamed-up with Pulse of the Twin Cities newspaper to present a series of four showcases to promote Twin Cities' acoustic music. I hand-picked an entertaining and distinctive sampling of the thriving, yet often over-looked local contemporary folk scene. I presented each showcase at unique acoustic music venues throughout the Twin Cities. As the organizer of the series, I hosted each showcase as well as performed my original music. ~ k.t.