

Kellie Parr

BY CYLE LEWIS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE LOEHLE

Bringing to mind the acoustic resurgence of the late 1980s and early 1990s, singer-songwriter Kellie Parr combines heart-on-her-sleeve raw, confessional lyrics with no frills earthy folk rock in a winning combo that has garnered her a faithful following both locally and regionally. Like the Indigo Girls with a Shawn Colvin flair, Kellie's songs tell her stories, stories that echo her deep connection to the Golden Isles and the water that surrounds them.

Kellie grew up in Satilla Shores with "nature right outside my front door. I was drawn in and wanted to follow that. I never really followed the normal paths," she says. Essentially raised on the river, her connection to the water and nature ran so deep that "I was the kid who wanted to recycle when there was nowhere to recycle. I wanted to be organic when organic wasn't in, and before green was cool." For Kellie life, music and the water go hand-in-hand. "Next, I want to buy another sailboat; at heart, I am a sailor."

Kellie started playing and singing music at 12, following in the footsteps of her mother, Anne Parr, who is also a vocalist. Kellie played in various bands throughout high school and, after graduating from Glynn Academy, had a successful run with the Shatterposts throughout her college career at Florida State. After returning to the area, she released a CD with another local songwriter, Tim Haynes, as Haynesparr. Currently, however, Kellie mostly performs unaccompanied, focusing her attention on a steady string of solo gigs in support of her latest solo project, "Wish," dedicated to her son, Fisher.

"My passion is playing out (in clubs and music venues) but having that music available to take home. It gives substance to the experience, it expands on that experience." Recordings capture the heart of her songs but build on her live performances with full band arrangements that are "just enough." Still, experiencing the give and take of an audience is where she feels most alive.

"The way I have it now is perfect for me. I play a few times a week with a good, solid following around the Island. It's great." Kellie clearly enjoys playing out and really thrives in the restaurant environments, performing a mix of 1970s and 1980s classics with a few

of her original songs mixed in. "A lot of wonderful couples come out regularly. They think of my shows as their 'date night'."

For Kellie, performing is much like the give and take of her ecologically informed interaction with the world around her: a relationship. Her ability to relate to a crowd is one of the things she's most known for. "You've got to be able to feel people and sense their needs," she says. "I enjoy the challenge of trying to connect. I only sing lyrics when I can own them. That's when it's the most fun." Always searching for the middle ground between being a cover artist and sprinkling just the perfect number of original songs here and there furthers her "something for everybody" appeal.

Passion is worth nothing without feet on it, so Kellie donates a portion of all proceeds from CD sales to the Surfrider Foundation of which she is a member. It's an eco-friendly grassroots organization committed to protecting the environmental health of the oceans and beaches. Kellie feels a special connection with the environment via the ocean. "My hobbies all involve water. I am a former scuba instructor and boat captain, love to surf, paddleboard, kayak and sail. I've been told, 'Kellie, you can't do everything to save the world,' but at least I can do something."

She's been quoted before as saying "I almost made it;" on multiple occasions she has almost tasted that spotlight, the success that so many artists long for; in hindsight she now sees that she is making it, night by night, building that continuing relationship with the friends, neighbors, and those just passing through who come to experience her through song. "Life happens and dreams don't stop, but sometimes they do shift," she says. "Embrace your gift. Sailing is a good metaphor for me. You can't sail right into the wind, you have to tack back and forth, but you will eventually get there. Don't lose heart."

To hear Kellie's music or find her schedule of shows in the area visit her web site at www.kellieparr.com 

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Living a patchwork life, Cyle Lewis is a blogger at www.CyleAugusta.com, where she tells stories of songwriting, making music with her husband, family life, thrifting, photography, crafting, loving kiddos and spreading hope.

