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Music

Off the Deep End

"The trickiest problem in performance for me is getting paid."

By Michael Hemmingson
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"I play classical piano, badly -- mostly just to learn my parts," says mezzo-soprano singer Molly Wilmot, who lives in La Mesa.

"My dad put me in piano lessons, where I learned music theory and classical piano. In college, I got into classical voice training. Now I'm just taking all of that and going off the deep end. Typical chick singer here with no gear and no knowledge."

Aside from the vocal gymnastics of classical and modern opera, Wilmot records and performs with experimental arthouse



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band Pruitt Igoe and has performed in four shows with the San Diego Opera Chorus. She has toured Poland, Lithuania, and Serbia with the Joe Alter Dance Group and plays "the victim" with Viscus Edo at the Casbah -- "a little holiday bloodshed," she calls it.

Wilmot will be appearing at the San Diego Civic Theatre in several performances with the San Diego Opera Chorus from January through April.

LIVE SHOWS?

"The trickiest problem in performance for me is getting paid. At some venues, bands actually have to pay to play or are paid with a bar tab. I love to sing, I love to perform, but how am I supposed to feed myself and my family?"

EARLIEST MEMORIES?

1. "A burro poking his head into the driver's-side window on a family vacation through the Black Hills in South Dakota."
2. "Trying to swap baby blankets with my newborn cousin because hers appeared to be in better shape."
3. "Singing loudly and dancing in church and having a nun compliment me."

WHAT'S IN YOUR CD PLAYER RIGHT NOW?

"Local music, of course: *Another Ride* by Chad Farran. It's a beautiful album."

FAVORITE BOOKS?

1. *Sock* by Penn Jillette. "A murder mystery told from the perspective of a sock monkey."
2. *Choke* by Chuck Palahniuk. "The fictional misadventures of a sex addict -- bless the freaks!"
3. *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond. "Lays out the global migration and evolution of human societies. An eye opener."

WHAT DID YOU DO PROM NIGHT?

"I was dancing so wildly, I ate shit on the dance floor. I'm pretty sure there were five or six people sitting at a table nearby, and I

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flashed them on the way down."

FAVORITE HANGOUT?

"Anywhere, wherever -- I love it here. I've lived here for nine years. I like to hang out where my friends and family are hanging out. We go to the beaches, parks, bars, concert halls, galleries, restaurants, theaters, thrift stores, ice cream parlors...."

WHERE DO YOU SEE MUSIC GOING IN THE 21st CENTURY?

1. "Orchestras with effects pedals."
2. "Improv and classical training simultaneously."
3. "Music back into the schools, because we finally realized that we can't live without it."

HOLIDAY PLANS?

"I plan on spoiling my stepson, Jack, baking cookies and making chocolate peanut butter salty balls, and stuffing my face. I am also determined to talk someone into going to the Rose Parade with me. I have fantasized about it since I was a little girl in Minnesota. I must see it. I must be it."

BEST/WORST GIG?

"The first time is always the best. I was at a dive bar called The Blvd. near SDSU. I learned backup vocals for a couple of songs with a band called Burl Jives. It was my first real gig with a band. With the help of two shots of whiskey, I got up and sang. People were drunk and dancing on the booths and the bar and pole dancing, and they loved us, and I felt like a frickin' rock star, baby."

BRUSH WITH THE FAMOUS?

"I saw Richard Simmons in the airport in Omaha when I was a kid. He was blowing kisses and yelling, 'I love you! I love you all!' He had the most amazing Afro."

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