

## Interview: Singer/Songwriter Lara Bell Hits All the Right Notes

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 1, 2020 - 10:54am

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MCHENRY, ILL. – The venue D.C. Cobbs (Woodstock, Illinois) was the location for an acoustic set by 23-year-old Lara Bell, an up and coming singer/songwriter who has been performing professionally since she was 15 years old. Her rich and sultry voice, embodying a wide range of genres, was complimented by an enthralling stage presence.

Lara has been in the studio recording her original music with engineer Ken Pedraza for three years, as well as editing and producing music videos for her social media and website ([click here](#) [18]). On the site are her four professionally recorded songs, with videos available on her YouTube channel, ([click here](#) [19]). Her strong following includes almost a million-and-a-half views of her musical performances on that channel.



Singer/Songwriter Lara Bell

*Photo credit: Jeff Doles for HollywoodChicago.com*

Jeff Doles of HollywoodChicago.com was at D.C. Cobbs and got an opportunity to sit down with Lara Bell and ask questions about her past accomplishments and future goals.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How does your classical piano training affect your guitar playing and musical performance?

**Lara Bell:** At a young age, I was taught how to both read music and understand music theory. I was always singing, and I remember being able to keep a perfect pitch in my theatre classes at age eight because of my training. Piano lessons are the best thing any parent can do for an aspiring performer. I continued to take lessons throughout college, and the discipline and studying really paid off. I learned guitar when I was 14, and I think it was easier for me to pick it up because of my prior music knowledge, than if I had approached it without any experience.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What inspires your creative expression, and how does that expression play into your lyric writing?

**Lara:** I like to sit down at the piano or with my guitar and start playing a chord pattern. Once I find one I like, I start singing how I feel. If I have an idea or a story for a song in my head, I will channel my emotions toward that type of song, and I will sing phrases over and over again with different options until something clicks. Most of my best songs are written in minutes when they come straight from the heart. Writing has always been my therapy and way of expressing myself.

I often find myself writing about the things that hurt me more than the things that make me happy ... because when I am happy I like to live in the moment of pure bliss. But sadness sometimes lasts longer, so what do I do if I need to get my feelings out but cannot express them? I put them into song, as most artists and writers do. Music is my escape, and I find peace in being able to know that other people can relate with what I sing or write about. It is how I feel when I listen to music and read poetry myself. The beauty comes from the pain we all experience in our lifelong journeys.

So overall, I don't really have a specific writing process. I just sit with my instrument and sing what comes to mind. I have been using voice memos lately in case I forget a line or two I like, which happens a bit. Ha! Technology to the rescue!

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Let's talk about a specific song, 'What If' ([click \[20\]](#)). What are the origins of the song and its roots?

**Lara:** I always have to share this story every time someone asks about 'What If,' because the song is special to me has a lot of potential, and I love performing it. I've been told that the chorus has a catchy lick and fans have told me it gets stuck in their heads. 'What If' was the first song I wrote that I ever shared with anybody, ever, when I was nearly 17 years old. While I started writing at 14, I was always too afraid to share my music ... for some reason, this song became the first one, and I started to share more thereafter. During this time, I was applying to colleges for musical theatre and music scholarships. I decided to record a professional music video for this song and submit it to a competition for a school in Santa Fe in New Mexico.

I recorded all the vocal and guitar parts, my Dad helped me shoot the video, and I edited it all together. I ended up winning the scholarship, which involved Robert Redford and his Milago Institute. I did not end up going to the college, but there is a chance Mr. Redford saw my video, and I think that is pretty darn cool. I mean, he is a legend and I admire his work very much.



The Sunny Stage Presence of Lara Bell

Photo credit: Jeff Doles for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What new music are you working on?

**Lara:** I wrote a lot during quarantine, and have a new single coming out soon. I have been performing in shows I've did this summer, and just recorded a demo. My plan is to have the band record underneath it, round up all the media and press materials, and get it on Spotify as soon as possible. It is called 'Couple More Rounds,' also know as 'The Whiskey Song.'

It has a very country, foot stomping and campfire song feeling to it, and it's about how you miss someone so much and nothing helps that feeling go away, not even alcohol. It has been a great hit so far, and I think it is an awesome representation of the new path I wish to take with my music.



Lara Bell is Coming Out of the Shadows

Photo credit: Jeff Doles for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You have a very diverse repertoire of covers that you perform live at venues across the Midwest. What are your favorite covers to play and what gets the best reactions from the audience?

**Lara:** This is such a tricky question for me! My set list consists of a lot of different kinds of music. I jump from modern country to classic rock and folk from the 1950s through the '80s. I like to cater to every age group and crowd that I play. Lately, the songs I find that get great reactions from crowds are Tom Petty's "American Girl", my REO Speedwagon covers, and my folky version of Taylor Swift's "Blank Space."

Also, eclectic songs like Maren Morris' "My Church" and Miranda Lambert's "Mamma's Broken Heart" get good reactions. I love performing upbeat numbers, but I also really enjoy the slow and soulful ones too, like Patsy Cline's "She's Got You" or Johnny Cash's "I Still Miss Someone". A favorite I like to play is a mashup of Elvis' "Burning Love" and The Ronette's "Be my Baby". The list goes on!

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What are some of your favorite area venues to play at and why?

**Lara:** My favorite venues to play are all the venues! As an artist, I love performing at small listening room events. But as a performer, I love taking the big stages of the county fairs and lively bars. The best atmosphere is when you have a crowd that participates in your show by dancing and singing along, and just lending their ear to listen to something you wrote. This happens at a few surprising places, and it always makes my night.

Some fun shows have been The Raue Center Stage in Crystal Lake and The RocHaus in West Dundee. I have also enjoyed being a part of the D.C. Cobbs/Hart's Saloon performing team. They are a very generous venue. The local farmer's markets are always a pleasure, The Starline 4th Friday's event is pure magic, and the gals at Cup O'Joe Coffeehouse have also been so great to work with. They really care about the artists they host.



Lara Bell and Friend Keep the Music Flowing  
Photo credit: Jeff Doles for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** They always say that no performer gets where they are without a support system. Who and what gives you the most support?

**Lara:** I would like to thank my parents for always believing me and supporting my dreams. If it weren't for them for involving me – and may I add, driving me to – in every theatrical, dance, and musical activity since I was five years old, I wouldn't be where I am today. They are the best parents ever. Their music taste also influenced me growing up, and that is why I incorporated it all into my set lists over the years. I carry them both as a part of me wherever I go. My Dad also does double duty as my roadie at every show. I couldn't do it without him.

I would also like to thank my friends and family for coming to so many shows and hearing the same songs played over and over and over again and still loving them. They truly are the best fans anyone could ask for. Also to the music community online and in person, the audiences, the venues who book me, and the band members who play with me, they truly mean the world and I cherish every second. I am very thankful and so blessed!

Follow Lara Bell:

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*Interview by:* **Jeff Doles**

*Published by:* **Patrick McDonald**, Editor, HollywoodChicago.com

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