

Judy C hopes to bring numbers into Gulu show

Music Notes

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November 06, 2008 05:38 am

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About 10 years ago, Judy C, a musician from Ipswich, started seeing the number "444" all the time — on license plates, mile markers and mailboxes. Sometimes, she'd wake up for no reason and look at her digital clock, at 4:44 a.m.

When she researched the number on the Internet, she learned that people who see 444 frequently are said to have an angelic presence in their lives, and the singer-songwriter took that to heart.

"When I see (444), I feel like I'm on the right path; it's reassuring to me," said Judy C, who explained she's "more spiritual than religious."

In fact, the number influenced Judy C so much, she named her first CD "444."

Judy C will throw a CD release party for "444" at the Gulu Gulu Caf © in Salem on Saturday, Nov. 8, at 8 p.m.

The CD, released earlier this year, features 10 original songs Judy C wrote between 1990 and 2007. The CD's general theme, she said, is about facing life's hardships.

"These songs are about personal struggles that I've had," said Judy C, adding that she overcame the struggles through the process of writing about them.

Judy C grew up in New York and later San Francisco, and her parents are both musicians proficient on piano. To be different, she decided to learn guitar at 8 years old, around the time she started singing.

On Saturday, Judy C will bring her years of experience to the Gulu's stage, and she'll be joined by several sage musicians, some of whom helped her craft "444," a folk-rock CD with a smattering of Americana and Celtic influences.

Dave Mattacks will back Judy C on drums Saturday, as he did in the recording studio. He plays all percussion and piano on "444." Mattacks, Judy C said, lent his production expertise and helped her to pick tempo and time for all the songs on the CD. Mattacks of Marblehead is a native of the UK who has played with Paul McCartney, Elton John, Jethro Tull and Cat Stevens, among others.

Not to be outdone, Judy C's bassist, Richard Gates, has played with Suzanne Vega and Paula Cole; and Chris Rivas, the guitarist on "444," has played with Lucinda Williams, according to Judy C.

Filling in on violin Saturday will be Nathan Cohen of Gloucester. And classical jazz pianist Barbara Banacos, also of Gloucester, will play toy piano at the beginning of "Icicles in the Sun."

Judy C is familiar with Gulu Gulu. She also hosts a jam there on the last Saturday of every month.

For the moment, she's concentrating on getting the word out about "444," which is available at Borders in Peabody, Dyno Records in Newburyport, the Record Exchange in Salem and through her Web site, www.judyc.net.

"This CD represents such a large part of my life," she said.

And she's smitten with the name.

"I thought it was cool because, gee, who ever named their album '444?' At least I'd be different."

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