

WORTH THE WAIT

BACK HOME

Gold lamé hotpants were not a typical part of the wardrobe for a young girl growing up in Bosque Farms back in the day. But singer/songwriter Kristy Hinds was not your typical Bosque Farms girl in at least one respect: thanks to an unlikely friendship between her horse-trading grandmother and Bo Diddley, who was living in Los Lunas, nine-year-old Hinds soon found herself hanging out with the rock and roll legend's two daughters and playing the tambourine in the family band. "I do have drumming talent, so he must have spied that," says Hinds.

The experience opened up music as a career possibility for the youngster, who'd had piano lessons and had picked up a guitar along the way. "We were just doing these amazing things, and it just seemed like, 'Well, that's how life is. This is what we do. This could happen,'" she says. Happen it did. Her musical journey found its first success in the Northwest, and then, after a hiatus, it resumed in Albuquerque, where in February, she released an EP, *Strange Religion*, which has already garnered positive reviews. The EP's three songs all feature Hinds' signature sardonic sense of humor, her unflinching assessment of the zeitgeist, and her charming fearlessness.

At age 19, finding herself without much direction after several semesters in college, Hinds suddenly got "a bolt-out-of-the-blue lightning strike that told me I should go to Europe," she says. "So I did that. I did a walkabout." Visiting a cousin in Germany, she picked up his guitar and suddenly found herself with a mission: "I was going to go home and learn to play guitar," she says.

She started writing songs and attended the Dick Grove School of Music in Los Angeles before settling in Portland, Oregon. Portland was fertile ground for Hinds, who had various bands and gigged regularly. "I made recordings along the way," she says. "Then, I assembled them and put them out as a single CD"—1998's



Kristy Hinds has spent a lifetime learning a wide variety of instruments.

PHOTO BY DON JAMES/ATM

very well received album, *Into the Fray*. She also hooked up with some South Americans and, in partnership with the late Chilean percussionist Luis Opazo, formed Via Brasil. "We played jazz with crazy beats," says Hinds.

Hinds had a graphic design business that started doing very well at about the same time that she became pregnant with her daughter, Kai, so she put music on the back burner. A few years after Kai's birth, Hinds found her New Mexico home calling. "It does take a village," she says. So in 2004, they headed home.

A couple of years ago, Hinds dad passed away, and his passing awoke her musical muse. "That kind of kick-started something, I think," she says. "A deep emotional seed broke open, and a lot of creativity has come from that."

In her renewed focus on songwriting, she got some help from a ukulele, which had been lying around for a while. She finally taught herself to play it, and she dis-

covered that "it's easier to tease a melody" from just four strings. "There are not as many strings to get between you and the music," she says.

Building a tune, whether on uke, guitar, or piano, gives Hinds the greatest satisfaction, but performing is not that far behind. So she found her way into the weekly jam session at Ben Michael's Restaurant and found backing musicians for her EP. The EP's reception has been validating for Hinds, and she's writing more material. She has to, because she's driven to comment by a "strong sense of justice" and the need to connect with others on a human level. "This is my point of view. I want to get that out and start the conversation," she says, "because if people do sit down, they do find things in common, and they tend to like each other."

You can connect with Hinds at kristyhindsmusic.com, where you'll find music, video, a bio, an events calendar, and more.