

## Portraits and Passion with Jasmine Chadwick

by Reg Seeton



Jasmine Chadwick has been riding a wave of musical momentum ever since the 2010 release of her debut solo CD, *This Is Who I Am*. One of the most talked about singer-songwriters in Los Angeles after winning L.A. Rock City's "Best Folk-Rock Artist," Chadwick has steadily turned heads with the sincere sound of *This Is Who I Am*, which quickly caught the attention of Grammy award winning artist Sarah McLachlan who immediately booked Jasmine as the opener for the 2010 Lilith Tour in Las Vegas. For McLachlan and the Lilith Tour, Chadwick was a perfect match given the raw talent of the 2010 line-up.

Sharing the Lilith Tour stage with such talented female artists as The Bangles, Miranda Lambert, Alison Sudol, and Sarah McLachlan, Jasmine Chadwick saw her star soar even more when several top U.S. publications lauded Chadwick for her Lilith performance and debut songs on *This Is Who I Am*. An autobiographical portrait of her own life experiences and honest view of the world, *This Is Who I Am* is the passionate Folk-Rock result of a production collaboration with some of the music industry's top names.

For her debut, Chadwick laid the best possible studio foundation after working with highly sought after recording engineer Bill Malina (Ariana Morrison, Christina Aguilera), guitarist Shane Fontayne (Bruce Springsteen, Sting), drummer Blair Sinta (Annie Lennox, Melissa Etheridge), bassist Sean Hurley (Cobie Smoller, John Mayer), keyboardist Mike Farrell (Vanessa Carlton, Macy Gray) and five time Grammy winning mixer Manny Marmocin (Alicia Keys, Katy Perry). Also working with Grammy nominee Dave Kutch for the mastering of the album, it's an elite musical production line-up that only the most talented artists can lure.

As Jasmine Chadwick continues her upward musical trajectory while gaining new fans around the world, TheDeadbolt recently went one-on-one with the small town Canadian girl turned L.A. artist to learn more about the honesty of her music, her life in song, her time on the Lilith Tour with Sarah McLachlan, her creative process, and what Jasmine Chadwick has planned for the future.

**THE DEADBOLT:** After the release of *This Is Who I Am*, how has it been therapeutic for you to be so honest with yourself through your music?

**JASMINE CHADWICK:** It's funny how we call it "releasing" a record, because that is essentially what I did emotionally and that was the hardest part. I was holding onto all these experiences and observations and I had to find a way to translate them into words and music. It was very difficult. It's hard to look at all the good and bad things and embrace them equally as experiences, but that's what I did. Ultimately it was a very therapeutic process and the greatest reward for me is when I get to see how my songs connect with fans around the world and perhaps become therapeutic for them as well.

**THE DEADBOLT:** Now being on your own in L.A., away from family and far from home like in your song "The Best Is Yet to Come," is there a certain vulnerability that you need to embrace that allows you to become a better songwriter?

**CHADWICK:** Making the decision to pursue my dream and step away from my family, my friends and my home was the most difficult decision of my life. I've learned a great deal about myself through this journey and those experiences have made me a better songwriter. I feel extremely fortunate to be able to go out in the world and have all these experiences and at the end of the day to know that I have this place that will always be "home" no matter what. I find that this kind of unconditional love from my family and friends gives me great strength.



## CONTEST



## NEWS



- West Coast Rapper Nate Dogg Dies at 41
- Larry Crowne Trailer Debuts
- Philip Seymour Hoffman Heads 'Upstart'
- Drew Barrymore to Direct How to Be Single
- Selena Gomez Chats Bieber on Letterman
- X-Factor Close to Landing L.A. Read?
- The Biggest Loser: Week 11 Recap
- Brad and Emily Confident About Future
- Chris Harrison Excited About Ashley

## INTERVIEWS

- Jasmine Chadwick: *This Is Who I Am*
- Taylor and Peter: Shedding for the Wedding
- Bridget Balthazar: *Amy Poehler*
- Russell Hantz: *Survivor: Redemption Island*
- Sarah Nixie: *The Biggest Loser*
- Mel White: *The Amazing Race*
- Aubrey O'Day: *All About Aubrey*
- Blair Underwood and Zeljko Ivanek: *The Event*
- Lisa Edelstein: *House*
- Francesca Hogg: *Survivor: Redemption Island*
- Laressa and Stephen: *Shedding for Wedding*



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**THE DEADBOLT:** How hard was it to be so autobiographical with the songs for your debut?

**CHADWICK:** Subconsciously, I think I set a standard for myself long ago as far as being autobiographical through my songs. It is something I feel very comfortable with and feels natural, so it was not difficult to share my stories through the songs in the ways in which I did.

**THE DEADBOLT:** Who are your favorite singer-songwriters?

**CHADWICK:** It is a long list. Some of my favorite singer-songwriters are Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon, Carol King, Stevie Nicks, Karla Bonoff, Kate Wolf, James Taylor, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. I also listen to everyone from Seals & Crofts, Tom Petty, and Dolly Parton to Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Elton John. Of course Sarah McLachlan, Alanis Morissette, Sheryl Crow, and Jewel. I could keep going but that list is already too long.

**THE DEADBOLT:** What new artists do you like today?

**CHADWICK:** I have enjoyed and been inspired by Brandi Carlile, Adele, Sia, Mumford & Sons, and Florence and

the Machine. I also like Grace Potter & The Nocturnals, Bon Iver, Drake, and James Morrison. Neko Case, Tori Amos and certainly Chan Marshall (Cat Power) have moved me as well.

**THE DEADBOLT:** Now that This Is Who I Am is out to the public, how have the songs affected you in new ways?

**CHADWICK:** When I hear or perform these songs, I can still easily get caught up in how I felt at the time that I was writing them. Once you release them, it doesn't belong to you in exactly the same way anymore and that is quite freeing. I feel like I learned whatever lessons I was meant to and it's been really neat for me to see the songs take on their own life out in the world.

**THE DEADBOLT:** For a song like "Breakfast at Noon," what type of place do you go to inside yourself in order to be creatively free?

**CHADWICK:** Well, first I give myself complete permission to feel whatever I'm feeling at the time. With a song like "Breakfast at Noon," it came to me very quickly because it was fresh and I was caught up in the rapture of love. I was able to find the words quite easily to say what I felt without questioning them or caring what anyone else might think. I went to that place that still believes in true love while understanding there isn't always a happy ending. The entire song was really based around how I felt in this magical time in my life and I just went with it.

**THE DEADBOLT:** After growing up in such a small place, how has struggle and sacrifice given you an identity as an artist?

**CHADWICK:** Being away from the people I love the most and the place I will always call home has been difficult, but I had to step away to find myself as a person and grow as an artist. As an artist, I get to share my heart through my music. I still struggle just like everyone else, but I have a far better understanding of myself now and what I want out of life. The view out my window may have changed, but my heart remains the same.

**THE DEADBOLT:** Having played the Lilith Tour with so many talented and strong women, in what ways did that make you more confident and allow you to grow?

**CHADWICK:** I had this dream and I kept calling it silly, but nonetheless, it was my dream. I wanted to play at Lilith since forever, since it was first conceived! The thing with dreams is they don't come true without a lot of hard work. I had worked really hard to put my first record together. I didn't have any expectations other than to finish it. Around the same time that I released my record I was chosen to play at Lilith. Suddenly my hard work had been recognized in ways that even I had never dreamed of. When I found out I would be playing at Lilith with all these talented and strong women, I was really honored.

I was fortunate to be backed by a really phenomenal band and the crowd response was tremendous. Being a part of Lilith, surrounded by so many talented and strong women, reinforced that I was on the right path. To be around these women and share our experiences and music is something I will treasure forever.

**THE DEADBOLT:** From your Lilith experience, who had the biggest impact on you that you weren't expecting?

**CHADWICK:** I went into my whole Lilith experience with no real expectations on who or what would impact me. I did not really have much time to even think about it honestly, which was probably a good thing as I always over think everything! I was very excited and very much looking forward to meeting Sarah [McLachlan] and thanking her for the opportunity of a lifetime. Growing up in Canada, I always admired Sarah and dreamed of playing at Lilith one day. She has been a wonderful example to me as a woman and a singer-songwriter. She has paved the way for a really diverse group of women by creating a platform for each of us to share our own voice through our music and give back through our music to some really wonderful charities which support children and women around the world.

There was a tremendous feeling of sisterhood within Lilith. Having four sisters of my own, sisterhood is very important in my life and for the first time I really felt this sisterhood and a genuine bond amongst other female artists. Sharing the stage with Sarah McLachlan, Miranda Lambert, and Alison Sudol was incredible as they are such

fiercely talented women. These are the types of moments in your career that you live for. Offstage we were all just a bunch of silly girls talking about girl stuff. There was no feeling of competition, just pure love and mutual respect. It was really beautiful, and I'll never forget it.

**THE DEADBOLT:** After working with and being inspired by so many great women, it's interesting to see how you collaborated with so many talented men on This Is Who I Am. Can you talk about what you learned from guys like Bill Malina, Shane Fontayne, Manny Marroquin, and Dave Kutch? What did each of them bring to the album?

**CHADWICK:** Yes, I had the pleasure of collaborating with some really talented men on This Is Who I Am. I would not have been able to do this without them. All the musicians - Shane, Blair, Brett, Sean and Mike - really brought something special of their own to each of the songs and had this understanding of me and respect for my music that I truly appreciate.

As far as the guys you mentioned, I would have to start with Shane Fontayne, as he was the first person I went to with my songs. Shane taught me to be patient with myself and my music, to let the song come naturally. He essentially helped me to see the beauty in my music and how my "sound" lent itself to my environment. It was a real blessing to have finally gotten that!

Manny is the best and that's why he has won five Grammy's for his diverse body of work. I call him the "Mixing-God," because that is essentially what he is. He ensured the perfect balance for each song and taught me a lot about music in his studio. As a person, Manny has this enthusiasm and passion for life, people and music that is really rare, and you can hear it in the music he mixes. He is a really great example of someone who has worked really hard and achieved so much and yet still maintained what is most important in life.

Bill has a really great ear and he gave me the freedom and support to do my own thing, only interjecting when absolutely necessary. He pushed me when I needed it and taught me that I could go beyond the boundaries which I had set for myself vocally. Bill's work with Alanis Morissette on her acoustic album is legendary and it was an honor to work with him.

Dave Kutch mastered the album in New York and I was really happy to have him on board. He is really skilled at what he does and he created the best overall sound for each of the tracks. He taught me the importance of subtly and maintained the integrity of my songs and Manny's mix.

**THE DEADBOLT:** And how did writing with Jan Buckingham help you grow?

**CHADWICK:** Jan saw my potential and took me under her wing. She generously gave me her time and really taught me song structure. The song "The Best Is Yet to Come," was the first song we collaborated on. Even in that first session, I can remember learning so many valuable tools that I still draw upon today.

When you write with someone, it can be pretty intimate because you are sharing your innermost thoughts and coming upon these beautiful revelations together. I consider Jan a very dear friend as well as my mentor. She has been a huge supporter of my music. I've grown as a songwriter and as a woman because of Jan and I'm grateful to her for that.

**THE DEADBOLT:** You're currently at work on your next album. How is it going to be different than This is Who I am?

**CHADWICK:** This Is Who I Am was a portrait of me at the time it was released. I am in an entirely different place now mentally, physically, spiritually and musically, and therefore I have something different to offer fans on my next album. I think my songwriting has grown between these two albums and there are a lot more up tempo songs in the mix. I learned a lot making This Is Who I Am, and I'll be applying what I have learned on the next album. I still have the same hunger and drive that I always did, maybe even more so now. I'm grateful that I am able to do what I love and that people are beginning to respond to my music. That continues to amaze me and I'm extremely grateful for every single fan I have. They're sharing this journey with me.