

## Sound Surfing: Lara Herscovitch lives in service of the arts

By Mike Horyczun Published 12:00 am, Saturday, January 27, 2018



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Lara Herscovitch headlines at Voices Cafe in Westport on Saturday night.

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Ask Lara Herscovitch about her music, and you'll quickly understand why the acclaimed singer-songwriter chose to pursue it as her career. Or maybe it was the music that chose her. "The simplest way I can explain it is to say that music doesn't feel like what I do, it feels like who I am," said Herscovitch, who appears locally Saturday, Jan. 27, in a trio format at Voices Café in Westport. "Playing music in whatever form – recording, live concerts, rehearsing, choral improv – is when I feel most like myself, my most joyful and aligned."

Herscovitch, who graduated high school in Westport, earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Connecticut, and was employed in this field for a number of years, although music has always been an essential part of her life. "Having two full-time careers was exhausting, and after 20-odd years of juggling both, the time was right to commit more fully to music and writing," she said. "I am truly grateful for the work I was a part of in the nonprofit sector. I was able to focus on international development and education, environmental protection, organizational and community development and, most recently, I spent about a decade in criminal justice reform and addressing the civil and human rights crisis of the over-criminalization of America. As much as I loved this work, I just couldn't sustain both careers and stay healthy. But I know that a life in the arts is also a life in service. So, the content, spirit and values will all continue and amplify."

The singer-guitarist currently does a lot of touring, on average, three weekends a month, and she just got back from a Georgia, Florida, Alabama stint. "I love traveling to different parts of the country and gaining a better understanding of different cultures, seeing what's unique and what we share. The American folk music community is a wonderful, tight-knit group of people, so traveling also often feels like part of a family reunion, just in a really big family," she said. "I've been touring at a rate of about 50 dates-a-year. Time will tell how much that will change. I've always been much more focused on the quality of concerts rather than the quantity. When I add in the writing, recording, video production, workshops, coaching, crowd-funding, administration and so on, it's a full-time job, and

then some."

This year looks to be a busy one for Herscovitch. She's teaching at the Omega Institute in October in a workshop called "Confidence, Courage & Creativity: An Exploration for Artists;" she's planning a choral partnership; producing her own music videos; coaching; doing studio recording for others as a harmony vocalist; and she co-created and is now serving as part-time creative director and editor of a new blog centered on leadership and community building. Oh, and, she's writing a book.

"It will be non-fiction, along the lines of the Omega workshop topic with personal stories mixed in on the various themes," she said. "It's still in the early stages, so it will change 50 times before it's done."

Herscovitch's writing takes many forms. "I wrote the music for a musical, a playwright friend did the non-musical parts, after the Sandy Hook shootings, a story set in NYC around themes related to gun violence. We never got as far as performing it past the work-shopping stage, but it was a great project," she said. "I learned a ton and kept and adapted some of the music for my own sets."

For her Voices show, the singer-guitarist will be joined on stage with Rick Brodsky on upright bass and Mark Zaretsky on harmonica. "It will be a fun mix of configurations," said Herscovitch. "Some songs I'll play solo, others in duo format with either of the guys, and some will be in a trio. Most of the time I'm touring solo, so it's very fun for me to join forces with great, talented musicians and friends. There's an energy and camaraderie on stage that's terrific to lead and be a part of. When I play solo, I'm the singer, guitar player, percussionist, and any other roles. It's great to have friends on stage to lean on and create a larger sound, a whole that's greater than the sum of the parts."

The singer's newest full-album "MISFiT" came out in 2016. "I released a single last year, 'Wingspan,' that's about taking a leap of faith. The way I see it, either we take that leap voluntarily, or life pushes us," she said. "Either way, a happy life is in inspiring each other and figuring out how to fly."

Voices Café is located at The Unitarian Church in Westport, 10 Lyons Plains Road. Tickets are \$25. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Seating is cabaret-style at tables. Snacks and beverages can be brought; coffee and desserts are for sale at intermission Visit: [voicescafe.org](http://voicescafe.org) or call 203-227-7205, ext. 14. For information on Lara Herscovitch, visit: [www.LaraHerscovitch.com](http://www.LaraHerscovitch.com).

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