

SHAYE

The Rat Pack had it; **Shaye** does too — absolute magic when they perform together.

With their 2003 harmony-driven pop debut, *The Bridge*, close friends Kim Stockwood, Tara MacLean and Damhnait Doyle parlayed their gorgeous vocal blend and outgoing personalities into one of this country's best stage shows, where outstanding, emotional songs are interspersed with ad-libbed quips and witty commentary. Now, with the follow-up, *Lake of Fire*, the three have blossomed even further, co-writing the majority of the songs and displaying stunning harmonies and leads.

“We know each other so well,” says Kim. “We know the good, the bad, the ugly, the pretty, so it's complete comfort when we are around each other.”

Lake of Fire still runs the gamut of emotions from fun defiance on the first single “*Lake of Fire*” to girl-power assertiveness on their kiss-your-mother reworking of the Waterboys' “*We Will Not Be Lovers*” and a rockin' fervency on “*You're Not Alone*.” There's an enticing invitation on the sultry “*Stay*” and an homage to their East Coast heritage on Patty Griffin's “*We Are Water*.” They also wrote a touching a cappella number about love, loyalty and faith called “*Ocean of Sorrows*” and the equally touching “*Star*,” a special tribute to Tara's late sister, Shaye, who now shines brightly as the inspiration and namesake for the group.

“We had never even sung together when we made the first record, so we didn't even know if it would work,” says Tara. “We all had our things going on. We had no pressure. We were just going to have some fun. But when my sister died, everything changed and all of a sudden the record became something that was keeping me going.

“I was in a really dark place in my life. The girls helped me to stay afloat and sort of became my sisters. So the thing that

started as a side-project became really central to my life. I don't know what I would have done without it.”

They now have an unshakeable bond that goes far beyond the singing group. Headstrong, feisty and funny, all three proudly hail from the East Coast — Kim and Dav from Newfoundland and Tara from PEI — but chose Toronto as their homebase long before Shaye. They have all pursued solo careers, but as a trio stumbled upon something that is rare.

Their voices sound gorgeous together, whether harmonizing or taking the lead — Dav's with its sexy rock quality; Kim's with its raspy, country feel, and Tara's pure folk-like ring. But it's *how* they perform that has enthralled audiences from coast-to-coast. It is the kind of experience that can only come from these three charming young women — funny as all heck with a kind of modern-day Brat Pack camaraderie.

So after honing their sound onstage for three years, Shaye came together for album number two with a new set of skills. As three independent songwriters — Kim with two solo albums, Dav with three, and Tara with two — they felt more comfortable as a group now. They did co-write on *The Bridge*, and knew they were onto something when their single “Happy Baby” garnered a SOCAN award, a prestigious Juno nomination and a Canadian Radio Music Award, but with this album, writing for Shaye was instinctive. They now knew what worked best.

“The three of us are really different songwriters,” says Dav. “Kim is the hook-meister. She's got a really keen ear for hooks and things that will sound good on the radio and Tara's music is more esoteric and ethereal and descriptive. I don't know what my writing style is. I'm very much nose to the grindstone. I'm the one who is pushing the situation a little bit.”

Kim steps in with her own description of Damhnait, calling her a fearless writer. “She a brilliant poet and a strong musician and also has this way of being able to see the bigger picture of a song.”

Leading up to the new album, Shaye wrote with a variety of people, including Ron Sexsmith (“the poor guy will never be the same,” quips Kim), and Gordie Sampson, who helped make “Star” the beautiful tribute that it is. The girls also decided to cover Sexsmith’s “Someway, Somehow,” instead of one of their co-writes. They also did a lot of writing with their producer Jay Joyce (Patty Griffin, Tim Finn, Chantal Kreviazuk), who had worked on *The Bridge* and collaborated with Shaye on “Happy Baby.”

After writing for much of 2005 — breaking just to go to Japan to represent Canada at Expo — Shaye invited Jay to Toronto to kick-start the album. He arrived at the beginning of ‘06 for the first of three writing/recording sessions at the earthy and intimate Orange Studios. “As soon as Jay got in, we knocked off four or five songs just like that,” recalls Tara, who gave birth to her second daughter, Stella, two weeks later. Kim had a newborn too, Sam, her second son.

Even with two infants and two young children to take care of (Dav is the self-proclaimed “super-Aunt”), Shaye continued to honour their commitments. Particularly exciting was the opportunity to sing with an orchestra in Guelph, ON; particularly sweet was that Stella wanted to share in the excitement. In true Shaye fashion, the girls brought the baby onstage.

“You just can’t leave a baby for an hour when they’re three weeks old and they’re nursing,” says Tara. “I had a gown on and I had to put my sling on and breastfeed her while I was onstage. I thought it was the ultimate multi-tasking. The girls were so great about it. It became part of the comedy.”

In May, Jay flew in again. “With three strong individual women, we need a guiding force and it can’t be one of the three of us because that creates an imbalance of power,” says Dav. “So when Jay came, it was like seeing the captain of our ship and we wrote half our record with him in probably the equivalent of six or seven days over two sessions. It was so easy.”

Because they each have different values and causes, the girls tend to stay away from writing about personal politics in Shaye.

The only cause the three united for on Lake of Fire is the environment, penning the song “This is the Moment.”

“We had gone to see Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth,” recounts Tara, an environmental activist, who once went to jail in BC for protesting clearcut logging. “We have to make changes in the world now or we’re in big trouble. This is a critical time for the well-being of the planet - that’s what the song is about.”

Shaye is thrilled that the packaging for Lake of Fire is made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper with guidance from the organization Zero Footprint, which they heard about at the premiere for An Inconvenient Truth. EMI enthusiastically partnered with the girls to zero footprint the cd – paying to replace the resources used in production (energy, paper, water, etc) – the money will be used to plant trees in any community of Shaye’s choice that has an FSC-certified forest.

In addition to all their obligations, they are all still actively working on their solo music careers. Tara is partway through her next solo album; Kim releases her first Christmas album (I Love Santa) in 2007, and Damhnait has been writing with other artists for the TV show Instant Star and the Canadian Idol kids. But besides their families, nothing takes precedence over Shaye.

When you’re onto something as magical and beautiful as Shaye, where true personalities and warmth intermix with an innate knack for entertaining and almost divine vocal connection, then you run with it. Lake of Fire is just the tip of the iceberg for Kim, Dav and Tara, who can’t wait to hit the stage and see what this new chapter will bring.