

LiveWire: Laura Siersema's "Talon of the Blackwater"

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on April 02, 2009 at 9:04 AM, updated April 02, 2009 at 9:07 AM

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When you listen to Laura Siersema's new release "Talon of the Blackwater," it is almost impossible to imagine that this talented local songwriter once felt uncomfortable with her own voice.

"I have always felt particularly vulnerable about singing, that continues to this day," said Siersema. "It was many years of studying voice, auditioning, before I ever felt a sense of freedom and connectedness to my own voice."

While the Greenfield resident's voice gives "Talon of the Blackwater," its beauty, her writing is what gives it depth.

"It's (the record) everything I can say about the journey, condensed," she said. "With each of the albums, it was my life as I knew it up to that point."

At first glance, the talent is obvious but it just may be Siersema's work ethic that makes her stand out in a crowded folk field.

"I worked intensely for a period of 13 months on this material alone," she said. "I did not go into studio along the way. I wrote the majority of it first, then went to record it. The creative process was much more concentrated an experience, and the tools with which I worked were becoming increasingly focused and sharp."

Siersema is not unaccustomed to hearing comparisons to Joni Mitchell when people are first introduced to her art.

"I've heard that from a number of different people," she said. "'Hejira' is my favorite album ever and her adaptation of 'Slouching Towards Bethlehem' is one of my favorite songs. Though I did not come to know her work until later, I consider her one of my heroines. She is a poet too. The volume of her work is just amazing."

Siersema is working on putting together her performing schedule and has lined up an afternoon showcase at Borders Books and Music in Keene, NH on Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. Her full schedule, along with the brilliant "Talon of the Blackwater," is available at laurasiersema.com.