



## Coming Into Her Own Marie Haddad Finds her Future Between the Piano Keys

by Kate Kowsh

In the three years since San Diego singer-songwriter Marie Haddad first wrestled stage fright to debut at Lestat's, she's had the chance to scratch a few things off her musical to-do list.

Having recently released her first full-length album, *A Beautiful Road*, Haddad couldn't be happier about the fruition of a musical dream, long held in the shadows of her mind. Full of soft piano arpeggios, minor chords, and Haddad's crystal clear voice, the album suggests the same clarity that artists like Tori Amos and Kate Bush have, but with a voice and lyrical landscape all Haddad's own.

As she sits, nestled in her vibrant red, voluptuously comfy couch in her South Park apartment, Haddad reflects on the state of her present surroundings — both musically and physically — as they currently seem to share similar attributes. Her apartment, like her music, is welcoming and comfortable, sporting interesting little trinkets everywhere. Hand-designed music posters, constructed during bouts of insomnia, hang from the walls, and instruments are strategically scattered throughout. Along the perimeter, shelves are stocked with neatly alphabetized 78 albums — a habit she still harbors from her days as a record store clerk — and photo albums, each tabbed with sticky notes to remind her where the snapshots were created.

A bright spirit, Haddad has welcoming eyes and shows a true concern for the well-being of those around her, even if she doesn't know them very well.

A widely self-taught pianist, she first began taking lessons at the age of five,

however due to her self-proclaimed "short attention span" she ditched classical training at 11 and hasn't looked back.

Although she first took a crack at songwriting on her Casio keyboard in high school, it wasn't until about eight years ago that she upgraded to a real piano and became serious.

While Haddad had always dreamed of attending music school after high school — and was even accepted to one in Seattle — she said that, on the advice of her parents, she acquiesced to teaching instead.

It wasn't until she sold her piano while in college that she realized how big a part of her life music really was.

As the culmination of a dream, which had been years in the making, Haddad celebrated her CD release at Humphrey's Backstage Lounge last June. "The show represented so much for me: overcoming fears, growing musically, setting a goal, and getting there," she reflected. "It was like I had waited my whole life for that one night."

A big part of what fuels her is the feedback she receives from fans who have connected with her songs. "Getting e-mails from people in other parts of the country and around the world, or having someone come up to me after a show to let me know that they think a certain song is beautiful or meaningful to them makes all of the work and effort even more beautiful."

Haddad will appear at Borders Books and Music, 159 Fletcher Pkwy. in El Cajon, Friday, October 6 at 7 p.m. For more information, go to [www.mariehad-dad.com](http://www.mariehad-dad.com).



Photo: Steve Covault