

Michelle Lordi '86

Singer/Songwriter



Singer/songwriter Michelle Lordi's newest

album was forged in fire. On December 26, 2017, Michelle '86, her husband, and three children watched their Huntingdon Valley, PA home go up in flames, along with all the lyrics and music she had worked so hard to craft.

Even the couple of years leading up to the fire were filled with significant peaks and valleys, including the birth of Michelle's two younger children and the loss of her oldest son's father to a stroke. Through all of this, music remained a constant. "It's been a difficult five years and I don't know how I would have gotten through without the music. To me the music is the community of people. It's a connection to elders; it's a connection to young kids. I have friends from ages 18-90 because of music, from every walk of life. It's my country club of choice now that I think of it!"

In the five years that Michelle has been playing music full-time, she has used her craft to create the community that sustained her after the fire, beginning in her own backyard. Not having gone to music school, Michelle reached out four years ago to two local jazz elders, Guitarist Sonny Troy and Saxophonist Larry McKenna and with them started a weekly jazz session at Vintage Bar and Grill in Abington, PA. "I basically went back to school through studying with them, by creating a weekly performance. Sometimes we have an 80 year age spread on the bandstand—a nine-year-old and then a 90-year-old singing. I'm proud to have something that is so long-lived that really connects musicians of all ages."

Michelle has also worked with The Kimmel Center to bring the history of jazz to 6th and 7th grade students at Martha Washington School in West Philadelphia. "While I was there, we discovered that famous pianist McCoy Tyner attended their school many years ago. After studying his song, 'Blues on the Corner,' the students wrote

lyrics to the song that related to their lives just as that song was related to Tyner's life growing up on the same streets. It was neat using music to connect 50 years within the same neighborhood."



HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA

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Michelle's love for music was first fostered by her parents and then heavily influenced by Holy Child School at Rosemont. "I really thought that the period after lunch was called 'chorus' and not 'recess'. We would rush upstairs so our teacher Nancy Moffitt wouldn't get mad that we were late. It sounds awful, but it was really loving because she put music first. She believed we were capable of making beautiful music and treated us like musicians, not like kids. Ms. Moffitt instilled in us how important it is to be serious about the craft of music."

Michelle occasionally returns to Holy Child for our annual Christmas Concert, which she fondly remembers watching with awe as a child. "I think I got my love for performance and music through really being present and watching that program in a sacred space."

While there were career detours for Michelle on the road to living out her passion (she started out in medical and pharmaceutical sales), that love for performance prevailed and has resulted in performances across America (including Birdland in NYC), three albums to date, and a new album containing her original artwork and musical compositions (all created since the fire) being released this year. I remember singing 'This Little Light of Mine' years ago in music class and totally getting it. You can't hide your light under a bushel. Even if it takes you 30 years to figure that out again, you have to let it shine. That's something I really understood from being at Holy Child." ❖