

The Blue Fire

by Snapper S. Plöen

SHANNON CURFMAN

T rue talent knows no age. The creative soul matures early in real artists and living

proof of this theory is about to touch down in Sioux City. Shannon Curfman, a 14-year old rock 'n' roll/blues guitarist and vocalist, will hit the Blues Cellar on Thursday, March 2 to show Siouland what her hype is all about. The Fargo, N.D. native has music industry insiders whispering, "next big thing," and if they're right, this could be the last time Curfman gets a chance to perform in a small venue such as the Blues Cellar before opening for John Mellencamp later this year.

It all began for Curfman at age seven, when she first took to the stage in a local talent show to sing. Three years later she was a regular at coffee-houses, and her grandmother recognized her talent immediately offering to pay for her guitar lessons. The instrument soon became Curfman's religion as she practiced it like an obsession. Later on, while attending the Fargo Blues Festival, she had the opportunity to meet and play with blues-rock star Jeff Healey. After that encounter, Curfman knew what she had to do, telling her parents, "Uh, I want to start a band, okay?"

Success in North Dakota mandated a transitional move to Minneapolis for more playing venues and to craft her debut album, *Loud Guitars, Big Suspicions*. Curfman wrote seven of 11 songs on the album and was able to pull in help from a number of big name creative people including, David Grissom (ex-John Mellencamp, Joe Ely, Storyville), Kevin Bowe and Bruce

McCabe, and the Grammy-award winning team of Tommy Sims, Wayne Kirkpatrick and Gordon

Kennedy. Her album, which was initially released last year, incorporates rock, blues, and funky R&B, all of which nod to her various idols she has drawn from over the years. "My heroes are people like Stevie Wonder, Santana, The Artist Formerly Known As Prince, Me'Shell NdegeOcello...I could go on," she explains. "My ultimate goal is to be like Sheryl Crow, who is such a big part of her music - she writes, sings, plays a lot of instruments, produces." She elaborates by saying, "It's cool going in the studio and just observing, seeing what's happening, but I'm definitely a hands-on person. I like doing stuff myself."

Curfman's talent and independence aren't the only things driving her; the need for a good education is important as well. She takes advantage of her home-schooling arrangement and is in favor of the method over conventional academic scheduling. She supports her position by saying, "I always thought

Shannon Curfman will be performing live at the Blues Cellar on Thurs., Mar. 2. The Blues Cellar is located at 2001 Leech Avenue, in the lower level of the KD Station. Doors will open at 7 p.m. with the show starting at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at Backstage with Ray, Uncle John, Flood Music, CD Warehouse, or the KD Bowl. If you would like to charge tickets by phone, call 712-277-8787.



they wasted a lot of time in school, where you'd finish your assignment in 10 minutes and then have to sit there for another half hour." Curfman says she can be more efficient at home where she says, "I can get a day's work done in four to six hours." In fact, she loves the arrangement so much, she usually schools over the summers and expects to graduate perhaps a full two years ahead of her peers.

With a bright future ahead of her, Curfman is confident about what she wants, "This is what I want to do with my life. What's more fun than this?" She seems to have the good combination of firmly planted feet and a wild and adventurous mind to ensure her future plans. She's like the pilot light in your furnace: she may be a small blue flame now, but she's on the verge of becoming an inferno. **S**



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