Music

Singer Stuns With Voice, Unique Sound

By Jasmine Weber
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“Music is such a powerful vessel for communication and expression,” Huntington-based musician Anna Tsangaris Johnson said. “I hear music in my sleep and I just feel this constant need to create.”

Johnson, who professionally goes by the name Silverqueen, said that her passion for music has been alive all her life. The singer is professionally self-taught and has released her first album, “Uprising.”

The 33-year-old said her life revolves around music, from her performances to her career as a music therapist. The singer is proud of creating her self-produced album, and said it provided her first opportunity to step into the professional music world and understand how much work is needed to create an album. It took a year to complete it.

The musician approaches her music with what some may consider an nontraditional point of view.

A guitarist and pianist, she said, “I am self-taught so I question if I really do know how to play any of these instruments. Half the time I don’t know exactly what it is that I am playing!”

People tell her she has a “haunting sound,” the singer said, describing her music as “passionate, spiritual, raw, melodic, heavy but not in a stylistic sense.” Accompanied by a string instruments and percussion, her bold lyrics in all of her album’s tracks evoke emotion.

She uses her own life experiences to draw inspiration for her lyrics. She said she channels her anger, hopefulness and energy into the lyrics, adding that her songs allow the listener to develop a personal connection and to interpret as he or she pleases.

“Whatever makes a song meaningful to the listener is important to me,” Johnson said.

The Queens-born artist has lived on Long Island on and off since she was younger, and in 2006 she moved here permanently. She now calls Huntington home, praising the town for its diverse population for a suburb. Things like the annual gay pride parade, art galleries and local music scene appeal to her, she said, adding that the support for music through The Paramount theater and Cinema Arts Centre show how lucky Huntington is when it comes to the arts.

Besides her recorded songs, Johnson uses her training in music therapy to give back to the community. She graduated from Berklee College after studying music therapy and received her clinical training at The Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City.

Her music career continues to grow. She opened up for Roger Waters at the Jones Beach Theater, and will soon play at The Legendary Dobbs in Philadelphia. She hopes to find a band to expand her career and soon will start working on a second album as she continues to grow as an artist.

Health & Wellness

Beating The ‘Silent Killer’ At Its Own Game

Centerport man shares story of catching an abdominal aortic aneurysm before it caught him

By Stephanie DeLuca
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When a Centerport man went to the doctor for a check-up, he found out more than he bargained for.

The man was told he had an abdominal aortic aneurysm, which occurs when a large blood vessel that supplies blood to the abdomen, pelvis and legs balloons and becomes abnormally large.

“I went to the doctor’s for an entirely unrelated reason and in the process of checking me out they found something fishy,” Dave, who requested his last name be withheld, said.

According to his doctor, Stony Brook Medical Center vascular surgeon Apostolos Tassiopoulos, more than 90 percent of patients whose aneurysm ruptures will not make it. Also known as the “silent killer,” abdominal aortic aneurysms rarely display any signs or symptoms.

“Many people are walking around and don’t know they have it,” the patient said. Tassiopoulos said there are a large number of patients who do not have any symptoms, and patients who do have symptoms experience lower back or lower abdominal pain.

“An ultrasound is the most comfortable and easiest way and safest way of diagnosing them because it can clearly demonstrate the presence of an aneurysm, it can allow us to measure the size of the aneurysm, and it can give us more information about the aneurysm location,” the doctor said.

Dave found out he had a 9-centimeter abdominal aortic aneurysm on Oct. 11, 2011 and was in surgery three days later to remove it.

“[Dr. Tassiopoulos] went out of his way to make sure my wife and I were thoroughly briefed on what was happening and going to happen,” Dave said. “He took good care of me.”

Dave, tired and weak after the surgery, spent about 10 days in the hospital, which his doctor said was normal.

The cause of an abdominal aortic aneurysm is unknown but there are a few risk factors associated with it.

“Aneurysms are more likely to occur in patients that have first-degree relatives that had an aneurysm,” Tassiopoulos said. “The other risk factors are similar to what we see for cardiac disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking, which is the strongest risk factor, especially for patients that continue smoking rather than past smokers.”

Patients who also have a history of cardiovascular disease tend to have more frequent aneurysms, the doctor added.

Tassiopoulos suggests that people over the age of 60 get tested. He noted that abdominal aortic aneurysms are uncommon in children and teens.

Stony Brook University Medical Center on Nicolls Road is holding a free health screening for those at risk for abdominal aortic aneurysms, carotid artery disease and peripheral artery disease on Feb. 4 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Advanced registration is required by calling 631-638-2100, and screenings take 10 minutes. Huntington Hospital, in conjunction with North Shore-LIJ Health System, will also be holding a free screening at the Dolan Family Health Center at 284 Pulaski Road in Greenlawn on Feb. 10 from 9 a.m.-noon. The screening is by appointment only. Appointments can be made by calling 631-470-5201 on Jan. 25 or 26 between 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

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