

## LEAH KAMIYA

### Biography

Leah Kamiya's exciting emergence onto the pop scene this year with her maxi-single release of "Because The Night" is living proof that while great musical talents can cast their true passion aside for a time, outrunning their destiny is quite another matter.

Raised on an inspiring dose of **Pat Benatar**, **Natalie Merchant**, **Madonna** and **Shakira**, the Japan born, New Jersey bred singer and performer discovered her calling early—at age 13 to be exact, when she set foot in a Tokyo studio to record tracks for TDK Electronics, where her grandfather was VP at the time. She spent many of her childhood and teenage summers in her home country, where her grandparents exposed her to the dazzling R&B/jazz stylings of **Wada Akiko**, known affectionately as "Akko" and renowned internationally as "the Aretha Franklin of Japan." Another key musical influence that sets the multi-cultural Leah apart from her contemporaries was the popular 80s and 90s boy band **Shibugakitai** that lived in the same building as her grandparents. She also cites **Norah Jones**, **Cassandra Wilson** and **Etta James** as having a strong impact on her own emerging style.

While developing her powerful chops as a singer and taking years of private instruction, Leah began setting her sights on becoming a multiple-threat performer, training in multiple styles of dance—ballet, tap, modern jazz and hip-hop. Life threw her a few crazy curveballs that pushed her career pursuits aside for several years, but there's something magical about the rekindling of a dream deferred, and it's hard to imagine her interpretations of the **Bruce Springsteen/Patti Smith** classic rocker "Because The Night," **Janis Joplin's** "Piece Of My Heart" and **Oleta Adams'** inspirational "Get Here" having the emotional impact they do without the wisdom she gained from the trials that have shaped her over the past few years.

The three track maxi-single—whose eclectic vibe makes it the perfect crossover project covering adult contemporary, mainstream pop, R&B, rock, even jazz—is intended as a "teaser" for fans to enjoy while Leah looks forward in the near future to her full-fledged album debut.

When a debut artist chooses to break ground on their career with covers of songs the world knows and loves, there has to be a special twist that takes the originals to a whole new creative level. With the help of her producer, Hammond B-3 master, composer and recording artist **Joe Kurasz**—Leah re-imagines "Because The Night"—which she first heard via Natalie Merchant/10,000 Maniacs's memorable 1993 version—as a softer, lilting acoustic singer-songwriter piece. She has performed this song and "Piece of My Heart" in their well known rock versions numerous times in live performances, but here gives the Joplin classic a simmering jazz/blues treatment.

Her infectious spin on the **Brenda Russell** composed "Get Here" is smokier and edgier, more groove oriented than the torchy original. Leah decided to record it because Oleta Adams is one of the first jazz singers she gravitated to while growing up and the song has always been one of her favorites.

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**Biography continued**

“Because of the combination of the diverse artists that have greatly influenced me and the multiple styles of dance and vocal training throughout the years, I have been driven to become the artist that I am today,” says Leah. “Madonna is my ultimate pop icon because I always felt that she is someone who inspires me to want to become a true stage performer. Her high energy and dance with the combination of her vocal skills made me want to strive to another level. Shakira, who started out overseas, adds the Latin style to my performances.

“Akko’s style of R&B with a jazz flavor has influenced some of my own style of singing now,” she adds. “After admiring her for years, I got to meet her in the Summer of 2008 in Tokyo and we discussed music and other aspects of entertainment. She was drawn to my ability to speak both perfect English and Japanese and joked about having me tutor her to speak English without an accent! In the fall, I was invited to a tribute show at the Apollo in NYC where she performed an array of songs from over the past 40 years.”

Since she started focusing on her singing career a few years ago, Leah’s life seems like a nonstop whirlwind of interesting gigs. Complementing regular performances at The Black Thorn, a hot spot in her hometown of Kenilworth, New Jersey, and venues like Champs (a college town bar in Middlesex County), the singer books many private parties and events throughout Jersey and New York through a popular entertainment company.

“The best part of recording and releasing ‘Because The Night’ is that I am finally starting to live out my dream,” says Leah. “This is what I’ve always wanted to do—sing and perform and touch people with music. I’ve always felt that this is what I was born for, and it’s great to be doing it on a level where it can finally be shared by so many. I’m no longer pushing it off, I’m focused and driven and it’s what I eat breathe and sleep. It’s also been so much fun interacting with the audience. My personality is upbeat and I’m a pretty wild performer who likes to have fun. The energy I feel from the crowd makes that experience even more dynamic.”