

TALKING BROADWAY

April, 7, 2011

What's New on the Rialto?

Interview with Lisa Howard *Songs of Innocence and Experience: The Music of William Finn*

Akron, Ohio, native Lisa Howard is best known for her role as Rona Lisa Peretti in the musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. After her Broadway debut, Howard went on to appear in *South Pacific* and *9 to 5*. On Tuesday, April 12th, she is releasing her debut CD, "Songs of Innocence and Experience: The Music of William Finn." To celebrate the release of this album, Howard will be performing at Birdland on Monday, April 11th at 7pm. She will be making her feature film debut in 2012 in *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*.



Nick Orlando spoke with Howard recently about the CD and release party.

Nick Orlando: What can you tell us about your debut CD?

Lisa Howard: It's a long time coming. The album is called "Songs of Innocence and Experience: The Music of William Finn"—all of the music and lyrics are by William Finn. It is a celebration of his songbook.

NO: This is the first-ever solo recording of just William Finn material. Was it your role in *Spelling Bee* that made you want to pay tribute to Finn?

LH: Yes, *Spelling Bee* is what I am most known for in the Broadway community. I fell in love with his music in college. I thought it was a good jumping off point.



NO: What are some of your favorite Finn songs?

LH: Wow. My favorite is actually a song he doesn't care for—"Holding to the Ground" from *Falsettos*. I also like "Anytime," "Sailing" and "The I Love You Song" from *Spelling Bee*.

NO: What can fans expect from your CD release concert?

LH: It will be a fun evening. I am not performing all of the songs; you still have to buy the album! I have great back-up singers.

NO: On the album, you have duets with your *Spelling Bee* co-star Derrick Baskin and Sebastian Arcelus. Will they join you at Birdland?

LH: Derrick will be there. Sebastian booked a gig out-of-town, so I got Tituss Burgess. Jessica Snow Wilson will also join me.

NO: You will be playing Siobhan in the upcoming Twilight film *Breaking Dawn* with Taylor Lautner, Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson. How did this come about?

LH: I was a huge fan of the books before I ever got the audition. My manager called and said you got an audition to play a vampire. I put myself on tape in New York, and the following week, I landed the role. We filmed in Baton Rouge. This was so different than doing theatre, but a neat experience.

NO: Anything else in the works?

LH: We are trying to schedule more concert dates, maybe one in my hometown. I will also be playing Paulette in *Legally Blonde* this summer.

Lisa Howard on Monday, April 11 at 7pm at Birdland, 315 West 44 Street, NYC 212-581-3080 or www.BirdlandJazz.com. \$25 cover, \$10 food/drink minimum.