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NKU grad proves she can sing, not just act

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Lisa Dames, a 1992 Northern Kentucky University theater graduate, is on a nationwide radio tour promoting her new country music CD "No One Like Me."

"The songs on the album are great songs," said Dames, who lives in Greensboro, N.C. "They're about life, love and relationships from a woman's perspective. Women will relate to this album. Men will like it, too, because they want to make their women happy."

Dames is promoting her first single "Just Another Day." She's also planning her first national tour and finalizing negotiations for distributing the CD.

ADVERTISEMENT Reaching this milestone has given Dames reason to reflect on the progress she's made since attending NKU and not being considered a singer by some in the theater department.

"I did the high school musical almost every year, but I was always cast in chorus roles," she said. "At NKU, I was always cast in the plays instead of the musicals."

At NKU, Dames did other theater jobs as well as performing. She was the assistant stage manager, worked the box office and helped with student publications. She also developed a reputation as being headstrong. The summer before her senior year, her willfulness cost her a role at the Jenny Wiley Theatre. Ken Jones, NKU's theater department chair, convinced them to take Dames.

"She got a reputation that she would explode and get angry at rehearsals," said Jones. "The Jenny Wiley company called to ask if she was good for the role, and I told them she was well worth it and worth the risk. I told her she would never have a career if she didn't get her temper under control."

Dames agrees.

"NKU made me not only a better performer, but a better person," she said. "And, it taught me a lesson about controlling my temper. After leaving NKU, I worked harder so that I could get to where theaters were calling me and offering me jobs instead of my calling them. I think this is a common theme with most successful people. If it were easy, it wouldn't be worth it."

She put to use those lessons in making "No One Like Me."

"The most frustrating part is getting it out there," she said. "Being an independent artist on an independent label is difficult, at best. We don't have the money to compete with the big dogs. But what we lack in dollars we more than make up for in energy and attitude. Failure is not an option."

Dames has performed in theaters around the country. In 2003 and 2004 she toured as Patsy Cline in seven different productions.

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