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Side F/X plays with 'Contradictions' on seductively rocking new album

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Written by **Kit Burns**

Side F/X can never be called predictable. On their new album, *Contradictions*, the band effortlessly shifts gears, from Motels-styled early '80s New Wave ("Scattered") to blues rock ("Her Escape") to country ("Life's Mystery"). Through it all lead singer Kim Cameron, who also wrote these songs, seduces us with her soulful tones. *Contradictions* doesn't sound like an independent release at all. It's a polished, professionally executed affair with top-flight guitar work, especially the searing riffs on "Won't Break Down," and hypnotically throbbing bass lines, as on the funky "My Hero."

Kit Burns: Side F/X's eclectic genre-shifting is not something I usually hear from rock groups coming out of Washington, D.C. How has the reception been in D.C. thus far?

Kim Cameron: D.C. is a confluence of different nationalities, cultures, and therefore, music. My co-writer and I have taken advantage of those diversifications and styles into our approach. So far, we have been lucky. Everyone has taken a liking to the variety – especially women. That was the general approach of the album, to make sure the listener did not get bored. Our general philosophy was [that] people like a lot of different sounds, genres – so why not produce something with a little magic in each song?

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Cameron: The biggest challenge I have come across is appearance. When you tell people you are a part of a rock band, they expect to hear a raspy/screeching voice on the mic. People are always trying to box women into a hardcore look or sound in the rock world – but to me, you can be feminine and sound feminine without losing the rock spirit. I believe it is important get the industry to take notice of music that has something to say, not necessarily who, or which, gender says it. It is in this spirit that we created *Contradictions*.

Burns: Is there a hidden meaning behind the album title *Contradictions*?

Cameron: Absolutely! Actually, the entire album has many hidden meanings. *Contradictions* represents a clash between sounds and lyrical content. "Never Forget" is a song about a cancer victim that I know personally and was impacted by, but the vibe in the song is actually quite cheerful. To me, we all face challenges each day, but it's up to us to see the positive to keep our spirit alive, hence the 'contradiction.' If you look at the album cover, you will notice vines wrapping around myself and my lead guitar player. As you unfold the cover, you will see two birds. While the birds start off together, as you unfold the cover, the birds fly away, and one of the birds carries away with it a broken heart. Similar to the album artwork, *Contradictions* also represents my personal growth – growth as a person, growth as a songwriter, growth as a woman, growth as a singer. The true contradiction, is, what you see is not always what you get. Inside all of us are some hidden talents that are often overlooked.

Burns: You co-wrote the lyrics on *Contradictions*. How do you find the process of a songwriting collaboration? Is it easier, or harder, than penning the words on your own.

Cameron: Having a journalism degree, I am not only accustomed to being edited, but find the process invaluable. Anytime you can place two people, and sometimes three on a project, you will always gain a better experience and song in the process. Since these songs are all about personal life experiences, I would be lying if



I said the editing process was not challenging because it can feel like someone is taking apart your soul, but in the end, if you can explain your story in a way that makes sense to others, that is really the objective.

Burns: How long have Side F/X been around? What is the story behind the group?

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Cameron: Side F/X started out as a basement concept with two of my very close friends, who happen to be brothers. One ended up as a co-writer on over half of the songs. We would get together; play music for their extremely large family gatherings for a couple of years until last year, when we decided to make ourselves 'official.' Part of the decision was based on the creation of the original works (*Contradictions*), which began on April 2007. It took us several months, but I think we are right where we should be, a very diverse mix of musicians from two Iranian transplants to a D.C. native who has fought hard to rise above a very poor and drug-infested neighborhood to an information technology professional. What I have found is the more eclectic the backgrounds, the more inspirational the sound. All musicians bring their background to the sound; they cannot help it.

<http://www.sidefxband.net>

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