



Songbird Hannah Kirby grabbed the national spotlight as a top contender on *The Voice* and plans to release her first original single, *Power*, this fall.

Storyteller With a Powerful Message

ALTHOUGH SULPHUR SPRINGS IS HANNAH KIRBY'S HOMETOWN, she is trending toward going places as a musician-singer-songwriter ... and storyteller. Kirby has always loved music, and she's been practicing and playing the violin since she was about 8 years old. But, she says, "It's my second passion. Noth-

ing takes the place of singing. It's the most natural form of music, and it's an instrument you always have with you."

She's just 21, but she has stories she wants to tell, and she wants to tell them with song.

Kirby is the only child of two educators. Her dad, Richard

Kirby, is a high school counselor at Cumby ISD. Her mom, Nancy Borden Kirby, is a counselor at Sulphur Springs ISD. They've offered Hannah all of the encouragement and support that a budding artist could want. "She is absolutely the joy of my life," Nancy Kirby says. "I think she is a gift from God!"

Richard Kirby agrees. "I think she was born to sing, and the stage is where she most feels herself, and it's who she is," he says.

Hannah Kirby gives credit where credit is due, and says she gleaned some talents from both parents—but about her musical gifts she confides, "My mom was a singer-songwriter back in the '70s. She played a lot of churches in the Metroplex. She was what you'd call a 'Jesus freak,' and she did contemporary Christian music. Then later, she always sang all the time when I was growing up, and I always sang with her."

Kirby is best known for her appearances on *The Voice* singing competition, the most recent season of which aired from February to May. Well before then, she was working on recording her own album.

"I was recording this album," she says. "I had 50 followers on Twitter. I was thinking, 'I'm going to record this album, and no one will even know I recorded it because I don't have a fan base.' So when the opportunity presented itself, I decided to go on the program to increase my fan base."

'I Love To Write Music'

Kirby talks about her experience on TV. "The thing that was cool about the show was that it was not a competitive environment. Because we were on these teams, it was more about the coaches competing than the artists competing with one another. We weren't trying to one-up each other. Everybody is talented in their own way and very different. You can tell that by the music that is popular. Someone might like a totally flawless voice. And then there is somebody like me that loves Bob Dylan."

Kirby performs a variety of genres, including pop, rock and soul. On *The Voice*, she covered mostly rock anthems



Richard and Nancy Kirby are daughter Hannah's biggest supporters and fans—and she is theirs, crediting them for the development of her talents.

and pop songs such as *We Don't Need Another Hero*, *I Feel the Earth Move*, *Higher Love* and her personal favorite, *Shout*.

Her powerful vocals gained the interest of country singer superstar Blake Shelton, who first selected Kirby for his team. Then singer-songwriter and record producer Pharrell Williams stole her for his team. Shelton stole her back as the show progressed. Kirby also accomplished some of her own pilfering, singing her way into the top eight and stealing the hearts of many fans. She accomplished her objective.

"I love to write music. I love to write my own fiction," Kirby says. "The thing I love about singing is that it is one of the greatest mediums to tell a story. All of the things that I love to do revolve around telling a story and sharing something with someone else—creating a world and sharing it and bringing other people into that world."

Since *The Voice*, Kirby has returned to working on her album. "This is where I grew up, and no matter where I am, I'm always going to think about Texas and East Texas as my

nal single and the title track on the album. It's my favorite song of mine that I've ever written. As the title might lead one to believe, I feel that it is a very empowering song.

"It's about a lot of things, and I want people to be able to listen to it and find their own meaning in it by what they feel and hear. It's a song a lot of different people will enjoy."

Happiness Is the Right Violin

"Singing is always a joy for me," Kirby says. "I basically live in that moment. But as a violinist, I always heard musicians talk about having a connection with an instrument. And I had a violin, and I loved playing the violin, but I just did not like playing THAT violin."

When she was in Nashville visiting with her violin instructor, Sarah Masat Holmes, Kirby said Holmes and her husband, Ross, took her to a violin shop. She said, "I played about every violin in the store. I was trying to find a violin that I loved playing."

Kirby was not having any luck and was calling it a day when the shop owner said, "I almost forgot ... I have this violin I just set up." It was a violin made by a 19th-century German luthier. It's a copy of a Maggini (a 1600s Italian violin maker), and it has a slightly bigger body than most violins.

"I just absolutely loved this instrument," Kirby says. "I love my violin, and it makes me very happy. It's also very beautiful."

Follow Your Dreams

"The main purpose for all people is to get up every day and to seek out what you are intended to be," Kirby says, "and to not let things happen to you that get in the way of who you truly are."

She says her purpose is to sing because that's a gift she has been given. "I also love psychology," she says. "That is a gift that my mom has. That is also a gift I have that comes from years of listening to my mom. The songs I write come from a place of understanding the human condition and understanding emotions and personalities. I would hope as a musician I would also be a counselor for people. That's where I hope my music will be.

"My main message that I like to tell people is that whatever your passion is—whether it be music or something else—don't let reality get in the way and block you from the dreams that you have. There are so many things that we would not have in this world if someone in the past had not followed a dream. Now, more than ever, people need to follow their dream. People can make stuff happen. Their dreams are needed."

Kirby's dream? "The same as it's been since I was about 10," she says. "I want to travel around the world and play music and make my living playing music. I want to share music with all types of people."

Kirby's first single, *Power*, is expected to be available in the fall on iTunes and Google Play Store, and her full album by year end. Fans can follow her progress on Facebook and via Twitter @iamhannahkirby. Until then, all WCEC members are invited to hear her perform at the Wood County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting, Friday, October 9, at noon at Governor Jim Hogg City Park. It promises to be powerful.

UPCOMING HANNAH KIRBY APPEARANCES

Bois d'Arc Bash, September 26, Commerce

WCEC Annual Meeting, October 9, Quitman

"Rock the Night" Arlington Junior League Concert, October 17, Arlington

Homecoming Concert, October 24, Commerce

United 2015 Concert—Winnsboro Arts Market, November 7, Winnsboro



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home—as my home base," she says. So she is back in Sulphur Springs but working on recording violin tracks and vocals in Richardson with Dave Walser, and recording the rest with Josh Silverberg in Nashville, Tennessee.

"Right now I'm really focusing on recording," she says. "I'm going to have a single out called *Power*. It will be my first origi-

NOTICE OF MEETING

WCEC 77TH Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, October 9, 2015 | Noon
Governor Jim Hogg City Park, Quitman

ENTERTAINMENT, NOON • MEETING, 2 P.M.



THE 77TH ANNUAL MEETING OF WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will be held Friday, October 9, at Governor Jim Hogg City Park in Quitman at 2 p.m. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Beginning at noon, there will be musical entertainment by Hannah Kirby, a singer-songwriter and top contestant on *The Voice*.

Kirby, a powerhouse singer from Sulphur Springs, is working on her first album, which will be a mix of all-original alternative and pop-rock songs. At the annual meeting, she will perform a mix of the songs she performed on *The Voice* and some original songs that will be on her first album, including her first single, titled *Power*.

Elections for directors will be by mail ballot and includes candidates for WCEC Districts 1 and 4. Members currently serving on the board of directors in these districts are Pat Lindley, District 1, and Brent Glenn, District 4.

All members should look for their meeting notice and ballot to arrive in the mail this month. Be sure to detach and mail the postage-paid ballot to arrive at the election processor no later than noon, October 8. Members who mail in a ballot that arrives by the deadline will automatically be entered into a drawing for one of four \$250 credits toward their electricity bills. Please DO NOT drop off or mail your ballot to WCEC with your bill. Only ballots received at the mailing address of the independent elections company address will be counted and entered into the prize drawing.

Be sure to save and bring the other half of the postcard with you to the annual meeting. This card will be used for participation in door prize drawings. As always, there will be many prizes, with this year's grand prize being a HD flat-screen television.

We hope to see you at the annual meeting.

Hannah Kirby of Sulphur Springs will entertain before the Wood County EC Annual Meeting.



Wood County Electric Cooperative

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Debbie Robinson

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MOBILE CONVENIENCE CENTER

Monday, First Methodist Church, *Van*
Tuesday, Family Dollar, *Mount Vernon*
Wednesday, City National Bank, *Hawkins*
Thursday, Brookshire's, *Winnsboro*
Friday, Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*



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