



## the emily zuzik interview

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It takes a number or two for Emily Zuzik's audience to warm up and "get it"; but, by the *third* song, everybody's bouncing off the walls. Not too long ago, the grooves in her music grabbed the crowd at the release party for her brand new CD, *You Had Me at Goodbye*, held at the New York club Pianos. Zuzik's outstanding band—featuring **Gerald Menke**, **Tim Lefebvre**, **Leslie Mendelson**, and **Tom Curiano**—helped her demonstrate that the recent review in the Village Voice (<http://www.villagevoice.com/music/0636,campbell,74381,22.html>), giving the disc an enthusiastic 'thumbs up', was right on the money.

If you think Emily Zuzik looks familiar, it may be that you've seen her in a bookstore: she graces the cover of the latest edition of one of Ian Fleming's best James Bond novels, Thunderball—a great biographical fact to have for a person doing a tour of England, which Zuzik *will* be, later this year, along with **Will Hawkins**.

"This one," Zuzik says, pointing to a copy of her first CD and sipping a bottle of water in a West Village Dean & DeLuca, "was the one that I just got out there because I wanted to have a CD with my name on it. The lo-fi urban gritty album. But *this* one..." meaning her latest release...and her voice trails off. It's not necessary to finish. Though *The Way It's Got to Be* contains some great material, the new disc was produced by **Joshua Kessler** (who just recorded a gold record for The Bravery) and recorded at his state-of-the-art Bushwick Studio, in Brooklyn. In addition to working with a top producer, Zuzik also had the benefit of being joined by some of the most in-demand players on the New York scene—Lefebvre on bass, **Keith Carlock** on drums, **Dan Mintseris** on keys. She says that, on the new disc, she's more of a singer, more confident in using her voice as an instrument. She mentions Ann Wilson and John Lennon as specific vocal influences, but Zuzik listens to everything.

"I can remember the first time I heard Madonna's 'Borderline'. Nothing that came before ever sounded like that. And the whole thing with the fishnets and such; it was very cool being a teenage girl, then, you know, with all the posturing that goes on. Everything seems so dire when you're that age," she laughs. She even mentions Kylie Minogue as another in the vein of fun, catchy dance music.

Zuzik grew up in a part of Pennsylvania where the most accessible music on the radio was classic rock—bands like Led Zeppelin, the Stones, Boston, and Pink Floyd. It was only later that she discovered New Wave and groups such as The Cure and Depeche Mode. All these influences may be heard in her own music, as well as a dash of country. "I like Jerry Reed, or [things] like Linda Ronstadt singing 'When Will I Be Loved' . It's not exactly straight-ahead country. 'More

like rock and roll with a country influence." She backed this up with a convincing version of the Patsy Cline tune "I Was Wrong" at her CD party performance.

Zuzik's also got a collaborative project going on, with Lefebvre, called **Mz.**, which creates triphop electronica tunes, richly mysterious and deeply evocative of the city at night.

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