

MEET THE BAND



Music is in Higgins' DNA

You can hear a smile when [Emily Higgins](#) begins to talk about music.

It was music, after all, that relieved her complete sadness when a fury of songwriting followed tragedy. Her only son was killed in a 1997 car accident. "When Jake was killed, I used music to pull me out of that," she says. "I started writing music furiously."

Though it was her first real attempt at writing songs, the tunes poured out of her. Shortly after, Higgins had three albums. "When you need (music) the most, it will be there for you," she says. "I think it's part of some people's DNA. It's certainly a part of mine."

As a child Higgins shadowed her older brother John. "I didn't want to go to the lessons and everything, so I just copied off of him," she says. "He mastered the guitar, but I went more of the songwriting route."

Those first projects were very personal, relationship-based. Higgins' latest project however, *91 Acres*, centers on another of her life's greatest loves—the Ozarks. The album tells the story of a rehabilitated 91-acre plot of land, Higgins says it's the "quintessential Ozarks property, with water, rock bluffs, woods, open fields, dry creek beds and hills."

The album was commissioned by the landowner who requested anonymity. It tells the story of that land, and its inhabitants—like bees and morel mushrooms. Higgins prefers the subject matter over the typical.

"This is such a different project than the others," Higgins says. "This has nothing to do with human relationships. Nobody fell in and out of love. That's what made it so much more of a good fit for me—not having to think about relationships, but to think about those things I love about the Ozarks."

Higgins will share *91 Acres* as part of Missouri Department of Conservation's [Nature and the Arts series](#) at Springfield Conservation Nature Center [Friday at 7 p.m.](#)

Higgins hosts KSMU's The Mulberry Tree Sunday nights at 10 p.m. It's a cherished weekly opportunity. "The joy I get out of the (radio show) is from the joy of sharing music," she says.—[Brett Johnston](#)