



Some artists make their music after years of training and tutelage. Others just poke around for awhile until a lightbulb goes on and something sounds right. The latter would seem the case with Jessica Ripka - a musician by default who didn't even attempt seriously playing piano until her early 20's (and by 'seriously' we mean 'shirking her Piano Class homework to practice whatever she came up with on her own instead'). But that's really all it comes down to - poking around in the dark, drawing from a deep well of dysfunction, and seeing what fits. For an extended play version, read below. Otherwise, just listen, poke around, and please enjoy.

In (Somewhat) Chronological Order:

**A Sunday in May of 1981:** Penny Ripka tells her husband, fellow musician Keith Ripka, that they should probably head to their hospital on the upper West Side of Manhattan. They walk the whole way there stopping for crosswalks and contractions. A few hours later, their 3rd child, Jessica, is born.

**Sometime in 1984:** Jessica and her two siblings are placed in front of microphones at her parents' church where they are consistently recruited to sing. It is quickly discovered that she like the rest of the family - has an ability to sing.

**Spring of 1987:** Some friends visit Jessica's family in their apartment. They have a son named Luke and Jessica decides to play "I Love the Mountains" on the piano to impress him. It doesn't work.

**Summer of 1989:** Jessica's family leaves New York City and moves to the suburbs of Silver Spring, MD. In an attempt to move their upright piano without spending money on appropriate assistance, they decide to take the instrument apart. Needless to say, the piano was never playable again.

**Fall of 1989:** Jessica sits next to a girl named Jodi in Chorus class and it becomes apparent that this singing gift is not shared by everyone.

**Summer of 1990:** With a piano no longer at home, Jessica occasionally 'practices' at her parents church. She begins composing small melodies one involving persistent banging on the keys up and down a chromatic scale called "Flight". A guy named Doug says, "You bang on the keys very...nicely." She takes this as a compliment. She also teaches herself the theme from "Rugrats".

**April of 1992:** Jessica is elected to direct a small video project on endangered animals for her 5th grade class. She decides that she will be a film director when she grows up and her father mentions Ithaca College's film school. Whether or not it was mentioned as an option or an order is still debatable after all these years.

**August 1993:** After hearing the radio for the first time in the car of her best friend, Marielle, Jessica begins to sneak listens in for herself on the headphones of her walkman (y'know those things that came along before CD players and iPods).

**May 1999:** Jessica graduates from Paint Branch High School just before her family is evicted from their home for the second time. With no money or stamina to enroll in college, she decides to move to Texas for a year and intern with a youth missions organization. She suddenly realizes that the world is a very, very large place with a great many things both beautiful and terrible that could probably use her attention. She also realizes that she will have to pay for her own groceries from now on. These are both tough to swallow.

**September 2000:** Jessica has her annual physical before heading to Ithaca College's film school and learns that she is finally 5' tall. It was a big day.

**September 2003:** Only at the start of her senior year does Jessica start to enjoy film school. She writes and directs 3 thesis projects to make up for lost time one of which is a music video for 'Blinded' a song she wrote as a sophomore. It becomes apparent once again that she has an ability to sing.

**June 2004:** With nowhere else to go after graduating college, Jessica decides to do what every other film student tends to do: move to LA. Surprisingly, she ends up finding work, and just as surprisingly it's not work as a waitress, barista, or exotic dancer. Instead, it's in Art Departments for major motion pictures.

**March 2005:** While hopelessly roaming the Fox Studio lot to deliver a large styrofoam alien head, Jessica is pulled aside by the 2nd Assistant Director who says he loved her music video for 'Blinded'. While it didn't help her or the alien head, it definitely made her day.

**November 2005:** In order to make ends meet, Jessica becomes an Art Department Coordinator for film and television programs. Her favorite designer of all time, Tony Fanning, grandfather's her into the Union and thus enables her to pay her bills and continue to buy her own groceries.

**June 2006:** In need of a break from the business, Jessica becomes a Backpacking Instructor for a summer camp with inner-city kids. She hikes the Sierra Mountains every other week and writes little jingles for the trip. It is discovered yet again that she has a knack for singing and writing.

**September 2006:** Completely exhausted and somewhat jaded, Jessica discovers a small church in the foothills of La Crescenta, CA that takes her under their wing and discovers that she does indeed sing. They provide her with opportunities to express that gift to the best of her abilities. They also teach her to appreciate a really good bottle of wine.

**January 2008:** While waiting out the Writer's Strike stalling all of production in Los Angeles, Jessica purchases an upright piano for \$300 from the local Pennysaver and begins writing music again and practicing for hours at a time. This makes her, as she describes, "happy as clams".

**April 2008:** Tony Fanning calls Jessica to work with him on another film in Madison Heights, MI. She takes the job with the understanding that it will be about 8 weeks in length. It quickly turns into 8 months worth of work. To pass the time and to get her feet wet, she begins playing live gigs and, thus, pursue a music career as best as she can. It's discovered this time by Jessica herself that she does indeed have a knack for singing and would be happy as clams to continue to do so.

**Present:** The story only continues....