

Performance

FROM SPANDEX QUEEN TO MOTORCYCLE MAMA

[Stacy Davies](#) Wed. December 09

Actress Katey Sagal takes times off for her real job: songbird



Millions of people around the world know Katey Sagal—or rather, they know one of her incarnations: to most people, she is the strangely sexy, spandex-clad, chain-smoking, red-bouffanted Peg Bundy, who helped propel Fox's first sitcom, *Married with Children*, to the top of the Nielsen ratings. But science-fiction geeks (and

Simpsons lovers) know Sagal as Leela, the animated one-eyed hottie on Matt Groening's *Futurama*; the gays know her as one of Bette Midler's saucy Harlettes; and these days, middle-class Harley enthusiasts worship her as Gemma, the MILF-y motorcycle mama on FX's *Sons of Anarchy*. With credentials like these, it's not surprising to hear that Sagal grew up in a Hollywood family (her father Boris directed the sci-fi thriller the *Omega Man* and her sisters were Doublemint Gum twins)—except that Sagal never had any *intention* of becoming an actress. All she really wanted to do was sing. This week, she takes her band on the road to OCPAC for an intimate evening of self-penned tunes that reflect yet another side of Katey Sagal: songbird.

***The District Weekly*: Early in your career, it seemed like you would head exclusively toward a musical career, didn't it?**

Katey Sagal: Yes. I knew from a young age that I wanted to be a singer and a songwriter—and that was really my ambition. There was just no question in my mind that I wouldn't be that. Acting wasn't even an alternative! [Laughs.]

How did Bob Dylan and Bette Midler figure into it?

I had been in a band, the Group with No Name, and one of the other girls had previously gotten me a background singer gig with Bob Dylan—by just bringing me to his rehearsal! [Laughs.] He hired me on the spot, at all of 18 years old. Then, after the Dylan thing ended, we heard about this open cattle-call audition for Bette Midler's backup girls, the Harlettes, and it was like *hundreds* of people. Then they whittled it down to 25, then six, then three. It was really hard.

And they picked you because you were great!

I was! [Laughs.]

Shortly after that you did a bit of TV, and then *Married with Children* landed in your lap. Did you have any idea how controversial the show would be?

I thought it was hysterically funny. I hadn't been on television very long—I'd only done one other series before that—so in the back of my mind, I kept thinking, 'Well, I can always go back to my *real* job, singing, when this doesn't happen.' When I read the script, I thought there is *no way* anyone's ever going to watch this! It was so bent and really out there. At the time, I thought it was just going to be a nice little reprieve. Then, *11 years later*.

And you did give Roseanne a run for her money.

Yeah, except that she was on a *real* network and we were on one that you had to adjust the rabbit ears on top of the TV to find.

Now you're playing a mom again—but Gemma is much more hardcore than Peg. Do you like the switch?

I love it. I'd been trying to find something more dramatic to do, and Gemma really sort of rocked it for me. The whole biker world is fascinating. It hasn't ever really been explored like this before.

But most importantly, you're doing a mini tour with your band—the thing you love the best of all.

I am, and I have a great band. It's all pretty much what I've been doing in Hollywood, a collection of songs most of which I've written. It's not really a cabaret show—I do some talking and tell a few humorous stories—but it's really about music and for people who love music. And it's all pretty loose, not real formal. I won't be wearing an evening gown. [Laughs.]

Or pleather, unfortunately!

Not this time!

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