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# The story of He's My Brother She's My Sister

*Rob Kolar of He's My Brother She's My Sister discusses the band's evolution and finding that his creative musical counter part was his sister Rachel Kolar all along.*

BY ROB KOLAR » The brother shares the truth behind the name.



Rob Kolar (far right) on sibling dynamics. (VA)

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## Sometimes Discovery Takes Hardly Any Looking

It is many a songwriter's fantasy, to discover their musical counterpart. To find someone who can be the perfect juxtaposition in a band. One who can complete that unfinished song, add that paralleled harmony or bring something to the table you love but wouldn't have considered yourself. Rarely is this person sitting right under

your nose.

Rachel and I had rather different backgrounds. We rarely attended the same school, generally had separate interests and often hung out with opposing social circles. There were times when we lived and went to schools in completely different cities. Most of my elementary schooling was spent at Walhampton in Southern England. Picture a Hogwarts style atmosphere complete with head to toe uniforms, polished leather shoes and socks pulled up to the knees. Meanwhile Rachel was in 'the valley' (L.A.) at a good old American public school. While I scrummed it out on the Rugby pitch and ate 'sweets with my mates', she played kickball on the blacktop and watched Gem on TV (truly outrageous).

In High School, however, our roles seemed to flip. She attended an all girls Catholic private school in Pasadena while I was enrolled at your American cliché of a public High School, nearby, in La Canada. While she starred in plays and studied sophisticated novels, I did my best to cut class and avoid suspension.

There was a lot of fighting growing up. A lot. We learned the true meaning of yelling and drama from our father, and gave it our individual styling in practice. Rachel was famous for a high-pitched scream, which could deafen the most resilient ears and leave your head pulsing and pounding. It was a harrowing siren, which would ring through the house (not to mention your bones). I was a rather mischievous youth, let's be honest, and when bored chose, too often, to create havoc. Oh! How I loved to pull the alarm! The 'alarm' would trigger the officers (my parents) on to the scene and the real chaos would ensue. Riling up my father became an art and I held the palette. My father, being an Eastern European with high emotion and a quick temper, is one of the most animated and entertaining personas to inspire into rage. I once made the mistake of mouthing off to him while he had an overripe tomato clutched in his fist. The massive red ball of sloppy mush ended up squashed inside my left ear. I remember the gooey insides and slimy seeds dribbling down my cheek as my sister giggled with hysteria.

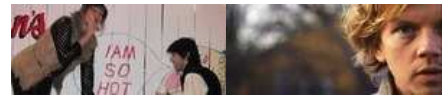
There was a time, not too many years ago, where the four of us had to share a one-bedroom apartment. We had lost our house shortly after Rachel left for college, leaving my parents and I without a home. My folks were able to find a quaint little place in Santa Monica, and along came the time where Rach and I both had nowhere else to go (at least that was our story). I slept on the floor with Dad and Rach slept in the bed with Mum (she is English hence the 'u'). Despite the close quarters and lack of comfort we actually became closer as a family. Rachel and I began developing more of a friendship (when we weren't fighting over who got to use the bathroom) and would go out together and enjoyed many of the same friends. But still never did I dream of a band together.

I was busy, to the point of obsession, with my band LEMON SUN. My dream was to 'make it' with this band, tour the world and be revered as one of the great contemporary rock bands (my odds were really high, I know). Rachel, meanwhile, had delved into the world of experimental theater. Her and Lauren (our tap dancing drummer) had started their own theater company, POSTFACT Productions. They independently put on surrealist plays for the local scene. Both of us were busy and frantic in our lives but felt something was missing. There was an artistic void lingering.

I had been listening to a lot of blues and early folk & country music. I'd been craving to write for a different voice, possibly a female voice. Rachel sang (mostly in the shower) since she was a kid and I knew she could hit the notes. She had a more country/folk tinge to her voice so it seemed natural to give it a try. She was also attracted to the idea of venturing into a new sense of expression and had a knack for poetry and lyric, she'd developed in her theater writing. Nothing serious. Just a chance to put on a new hat and feel less tied to a specific desire or career goal. I could create a piece for a voice that was not my own and she could use her voice, not for penning a script or delivering dialog, but to sing and tell a story through music. I recorded the song, which was a rather nasty diddy about my ex-girlfriend (but we went go into that). Rachel penned the lyrics and I wrote the chord arrangement. We played it for a few people and didn't think much of it. But Rachel had caught the virus. The wonderful virus that takes you over, once you've composed your first song. It is a thrilling sensation of being able to speak a new language. One, which, you can shape and construct to express what lingers in your spirit.

She began sending me lyrics and one in particular, called "Tales That I Tell" hit a chord with me. It was a rather wry and facetious account of her mishaps with love and drinking and the idea of letting all those things go and accepting them as part of the past. I had been playing around with a rather unique take on the blues style of

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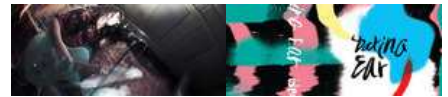


**Lil Kids**, *Slow Rainbow*

**Tartufi**, "Eaves"

guitar and one particular riff really suited the color of the words. It only took a couple hours for us to hone in and complete our first anthem and that was it. The partnership had been sealed. The 'Paul McCartney' I had been searching after for years, rummaging through Craigslist postings, calling out hip looking characters on subway cars, and desperately searching to snag from another band, was right in front of me, my own sister. It seemed fitting that the song "Tales That I Tell" would become the gateway to many stories we would tell together. Only a few years before I may have scoffed at the idea or laughed out loud. Now it was a reality. Excuse me, now it is a reality.

**He's My Brother She's My Sister's** album *Nobody Dances in This Town* is available now via [Bandcamp](#).



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