

## **Kickstarter connects artists with cash**

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Now that Mary Bue's album is completed, she can attack the to-do list that goes along with releasing "Apple in the Ocean." Things like: baking homemade pies, hand-signing thank-you postcards and writing personalized songs for strangers.

She's got some time before the house show she promised to play while wearing a puffy-sleeved vintage wedding dress.

These extras were offered as incentives when Bue waged a Kickstarter campaign, a crowd-sourcing fundraiser that asks fans to contribute money to help an artist create a project.

Bue is one of two local artists to successfully reach a goal and unveil the project for friends and financiers in the next two weeks. Her album release show is 7 pm Aug. 2nd at Teatro Zuccone. Photographer Justin Sinks, who also hit the money mark, will show 25 new portraits from his "Bound" series at 5 pm Aug. 3 at the Duluth Photography Institute.

"I was kicking it around for a long time," Bue said of using Kickstarter. "It partially felt like begging to me. I felt like it would be really annoying. But they're actually getting stuff. They're just pre-ordering it."

Kickstarter is an online, all-or-nothing fundraising platform. Artists ask for a certain amount of money to complete a project and offer incentives to those who give. After a designated period of time, if the artist raises the money they get to keep it. If they don't meet the goal, they don't get the money and the backers don't pay.

It has been five years since the singer-songwriter piano player released "Boat with No Oars" and in the meantime she has moved to Seattle and back. She played a few shows here and there, but mostly was focused on studying yoga.

"That took a lot of focus and kind of grounded me to be able to go on," Bue said.

"Apple in the Ocean" is a 45 minute, 11 song mix that includes songs she has been sitting on for five years. Bue describes it as less stream of consciousness, more coherent narratives. There also are touches of humor in the album that was recorded at Sacred Heart Music Center.

"It's going to be more poppy than my other releases," Bue said. "My other releases have had a melancholy feel to them. This is more upbeat."

The musician known for a minimalist approach - just piano and vocals - has added a full band on most of the songs and Charlie Parr makes an appearance.

An early review by Amy Clarke of KAXE-FM says of the album: "It drifts on a platform of piano; rises and falls like waves ... Rife with metaphor and masterful melodies."

Bue launched her Kickstarter campaign in mid-April with the intent of raising \$3,300 by June 1. In a short video on her website, Bue wanders around in a vintage wedding dress -- a play on the word "proposal" -- and talks about who she is and what she wanted to do with the album.

She included a breakdown of how the money would be spent: \$2,000 for recording and \$1,500 for CD duplication, as well as money for paying musicians, the making and editing of a video and promotion. Bue took into consideration a grant he received in 2011 and said she would eat the remaining \$300 if not covered.

By her deadline she had exceeded her goal by about \$1,400 - a surprise to Bue, who at times wondered if she would succeed in reaching the goal. She had 104 backers, which included people she had never met.

"After this long break between albums, it was really validating," she said.

Bue recently received the completed albums and was in the first stages of making good on the incentives she offered. One fan is getting a personal concert at a conservatory in California and has requested that she write a song about the board game "Clue."

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