

# Following

# HART

Former talk show host of NBC



By **Carmen Elizabeth Greger**

She's a colorful combination of funky-Euro-Indie-chic, down-to-earth and bubbly. Like a crisp white button down or a little black dress, she's both classic and hip. Lauren Hart is truly timeless. This organic entertainer is an inspirational and honest human being who naturally appeals to a broad audience for far more reasons than her charm and multi-faceted talents. Lauren's music, in one way or another, tells us the stories about our own lives. By simply being and sharing her true self, Lauren Hart makes it so easy for us to feel connected with both her lyrics and her life.

Lauren has got a vibe all her own. She's bold and fiery, yet pure and humble. Lauren is compassionate and kind, yet ambitious and driven. This singer-songwriter and ex-tv-talk-show-co-host has been known to generate grandiose ideas and encounter complex situations, but she is as simple and profound as her mission to help make the world a better place. Daughter of the late Gene Hart, she's the Flyers national anthem singer with the voice of a grounded angel and eyes whose mere glance reflects the depth of her spirited journey from tragedy to triumph.

Often tragedies do call us to wake up to the moment-to-stop living the dead-end existence of the 'what if?' or the 'should-have-could-have-would-have.' Such is the case with Hart. In 2000, she was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Five plus years later, she attributes her elevated zest for life to that terrifying phoenix-rising journey. Lauren developed the supreme courage and determination that rising above and conquering her gut-wrenching cancer encounter demanded. After witnessing first-hand just how precious the gift of life is and how delicate it can be, she is unmistakably more compelled to attempt anything that stirs her passion for creativity or ads to a unique, deep appreciation for the endless beauty of life.

Hart, like many, has lived parallel lives. She married and had to two careers; one that paid the bills and her music that enabled her to exercise her greatest passion. Although a unique and door-opening journey, this demanding sleep-on-the-back-burner schedule wrought havoc on her peace of

mind and overall state of well-being. After standing at the edge of the plank in bottomless contemplation, she finally took the leap of faith. Lauren peacefully conceded her Channel 10 co-host TV personality so that she could surrender the difficult juggling and balancing act with her musical career. "(NBC) has been 100 % supportive of my choice and our relationship is open and ongoing," says Hart. I will still be involved in the show, but this time, on the right 'side of the couch.'

Just as Lauren brought a lot to the Channel 10 roundtable, enthusiastically spicing up the NBC network, she openly credits the 10! Show with introducing her to many opportunities, including her two truest loves-Flyer, her border collie that she adopted on a pet special, and Todd Carmichael, her husband, owner of La Colombe (the best coffee around, by far! Check out Carmichael's Rittenhouse Square & Manayunk locations & LaColombe.com). How majestic is it that she and Todd met on January 5, 2005, the exact day Lauren reached her five year remission mark? The song 'Five' on her latest release was written for the love of Todd. Her music is truly the soundtrack of her life; this Euro-blooded Philly native, like many successful artists, recreates what she knows and listeners of all walks of life adore her for it. Already a highly acclaimed, international musician with a variety of stellar experiences on her resume, she has opened for Sinatra and shared the stage with 10,000 Maniacs, Train and Fiona Apple. Lauren was also invited to sing at Clinton's Presidential Inauguration.

As I write this article, Lauren's lyrics and organic melodies are streaming from her website into my home, prompting my one year old to sway back and forth clapping his hands with an ear-to-ear grin. She definitely has a voice that communicates with younger audiences, a fact that Disney has already picked up on, prompting the inclusion of her 1980 recording of The Star Spangled Banner in the movie 'Miracle'. I hope you find as much pleasure and inspiration as I did in the following interview that I was truly honored to have conducted with Lauren Hart.

## OUR HEART TO HART Q & A...



**PF:** Lauren, you are a very unique and extremely interesting person. Which events in your life primarily shaped you into the courageous, inspiring and talented woman that you are?

**LH:** Wow ... thanks. My parents, of course, had a hand in the whole thing. I so admire both of them. Having survived as a musician for all this time does wonders for your character and being a cancer survivor changes everything. I appreciate life in a way that most might only see at the end of their days.

**PF:** How do you personally measure success?

**LH:** I measure it by the people in my life. I look at them and think I must have done something good.

**PF:** Three words that best describe you....

**LH:** resilient, determined, compassionate

**PF:** What was the absolute best moment in your life thus far?

**LH:** The day I married my husband Todd.

**PF:** The best place for a dinner out in Philly?

**LH:** The Barclay

**PF:** Your favorite meal there?

**LH:** A great bottle of wine and the black truffle mashed potatoes. What else do you need?

**PF:** Your recent Channel 10! Show resignation indicates a choice to more effectively focus on your music career. Please explain in detail your personal reasoning, feelings and logistics behind this decision. How difficult a move was it?

**LH:** I had no time for my music. Getting up at 6:00am certainly hurts when most musicians are out at 1:00am just finishing up their nights. And simply put, I have a much greater passion for music. TV was a great experience and I would not rule it out entirely, but.....

**PF:** So, how challenging was it for you to perform your music at night and work on the 10! Show the next morning?

**LH:** Tough, I have sung through all sorts of adversity but lack of sleep is a killer and is the only thing that really has an impact on my voice. I have been able to sing when I can't speak but NOT when I haven't slept.

**PF:** How did you originally get the 10! Show gig?

**LH:** Right time... right place. I was a guest on the show and the host spot was available. I asked.

**PF:** Way to go... it's so refreshing that you believe in yourself to the degree that you can just put yourself out there like that and seize an opportunity. You're bound to be a positive role model for many.

**PF:** What did you like/dislike about being a 'talk show host'?

**LH:** Interviewing people who were doing what I really wanted to be doing. I felt like I was on the wrong side of the couch so to speak.

**PF:** What are your plans/goals for your music career?

**LH:** Just to be the best musician I can, to constantly grow, and to get into film scoring! I have always heard music when I look at life around me.

**PF:** And for your personal life?

**LH:** To enjoy my life with Todd, stay healthy, be someone who cares about the world, and to try and make a difference.

**PF:** A Songwriter, vocals, acoustic guitar and piano... wow! Are you self-taught?

**LH:** I'm self taught via singing lessons, piano lessons, a college degree in music theory and composition, and 10 years on the road with all instruments in tow.

**PF:** What is your absolute favorite song to perform?

**LH:** HOLD ME HIGH. I wrote it for my father.

**PF:** Who are your greatest influences musically?

**LH:** I love Annie Lennox, Nina Simone, Astrud Gilberto, Gladys Knight, The Beatles, U2.

**PF:** What is the primary message of your music?

**LH:** Hope and self- discovery. We are all on the journey and need to find the connections that allow us to be sympathetic.

**PF:** How does singing/performing make you feel?

**LH:** Although I was truly terrified at first, it is the one time I feel like everything is in harmony. I am most comfortable and fulfilled while I am singing.

**PF:** Will you explain for us the story of your 2006 debut '5 Lifetimes' and the journey the 11 songs take the listener on?

**LH:** In the course of our lives we go through many different phases. Some of them feel like a life unto themselves. The music is about living over and over again in ONE lifetime. Five lifetimes came from Five years cancer free. The journey is one of beauty and happiness. How to find it when it looks like there is none to be found and how amazing it can be when you do.

**PF:** Who is 'I Might Be' about?

**LH:** Anyone and everything that ever saw me as less than whole. For all my flaws and grandiose ideas I might still be loved for what I do and who I am.

**PF:** What's your take on American Idol?

**LH:** The question with AI is do I want to be famous or do I want to be a musician? Famous is short-lived, being a musician is a lifetime. American Idol has nothing to do with being an artist. That being said, Kelly Clarkson has a great voice and it is a little bit of a guilty pleasure.

**PF: Of all the places you've been and performances done, which were the most memorable and why?**

LH: Opening for Frank Sinatra in Monte Carlo, Game Six Flyers vs. Devils 2000 (I was in remission after a long season), and playing at President Clinton's Inauguration in DC.

**PF: Aside from your music, what are you most passionate about?**

LH: Human Rights and Conservation.

**PF: Your wildest fantasy?**

LH: A GRAMMY AWARD.

**PF: Your perfect Sunday...**

LH: Reading the NY TIMES, being at home with nowhere to be, planning my next adventure!

**PF: Your mission in life....**

LH: To be good to other people, give a little hope, and to make a difference.

**PF: Your greatest Fear?**

LH: People I love suffering.

**PF: Your Biggest Regret?**

LH: None. Except for that one guy.....

**PF: Would you say you are a spiritual/religious person?**

LH: To believe in something is a good thing, but I don't follow organized religion. I don't see much respect or tolerance for each other. The Big Three, Christians, Jews, and Muslims are drowning in their own hatred of each other, all in the name of religion.

**PF: The best piece of advice you've ever received and who gave it to you....**

LH: My father-sing every chance you get for anyone who will listen and then when there isn't anyone left, sing some more.

**PF: Both of your parents were in the circus at one point. How did this experience affect you?**

LH: I have a sense of humor, adventure, and the ability to believe that anything is possible.

**PF: Thankfully, you're five years in remission! You so bravely underwent chemotherapy and overcame huge obstacles when faced with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Please describe your overall experience.**

LH: Life changing, physically rotten, emotionally worse, and then one day the sun returned and life began again. There was no turning back and the world all of the sudden was mine again. I try not to dwell on the five-year thing but it did feel pretty good. I think you get scared to say, "cure" because there will always be that small fear. You learn to live with it and to try to live a good life here and now. I actively support Pennsylvania Hospital, The Wellness Community, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, the Foundation for Personal Wellness.

**PF: What is your message to other survivors?**

LH: Believe. There is always hope.

**PF: What is your message to those currently going through cancer treatments?**

LH: There is a future and a whole long life ahead of you. It's never the same though- it's better.

**PF: What advice can you give to those engaged in parallel careers who want to surrender one to focus on their true calling as you did, but whose fear of change still has them sitting on the fence?**

LH: You must love what you do. You must not compromise. There is always a way. There is only one life and only one chance. It's never too late.

**PF: How do you find time for fitness and what types of activities do you participate in?**

LH: I work out everyday thanks to Roger and Elanna Schwab of Main Line Health and Fitness. They have both trained me over the past six years and have influenced my entire regimen. I do cardio, lift weights, do yoga, spinning classes, swim and walk. I work-out every day, without fail. I make sure I am always active.

**PF: What advice can you give to the general public about taking preventative measures to be healthy?**

LH: There are no guarantees. Enjoy life. Be forgiving. You don't have to be perfect, just at peace.

To read more of our interview with Lauren Hart, go to [www.PhillyFitMagazine.com](http://www.PhillyFitMagazine.com) where you'll find more than 10 bonus questions! To get to know more about Lauren Hart, listen for her on WXPB, check out her website at [www.Laurenhart.com](http://www.Laurenhart.com), pick up her CD's 'Painted Bride', 'Girl Keeps On' and '5 Lifetimes', or get the full effect and check her out live! Lauren, Our Sincerest Congratulations on Your Five Years of Remission!



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