

## WHEN MAGIC HAPPENS: MAMA LENNY AND THE REMEDY'S DYNAMITE FIRST YEAR

By Rhea Maze

It all began with a text message, a mathematical theorem, a horoscope, and a slow blues song. Everything since has fallen into place via serendipitous twists of fate for Mama Lenny and the Remedy, an 8-piece rock, rhythm, and blues band that exploded onto the Fort Collins music scene last summer.

"It's like when you first start dating someone and all you want to do is be with them and it's all you can think about," says Laniece 'Mama Lenny' Schleicher, lead vocalist, about the first few weeks the band practiced together in August 2011.

Their devotion, fueled by unstoppable collaborative chemistry, resulted in everyone finding the energy to stay up until the wee hours playing music despite day jobs and family commitments. Before their first live show at Road 34, they had already recorded a 6-song demo. Fast-forward one year later and the band's resume includes opening for Alison Krauss and releasing a stunning debut album titled *Punches and Hugs*.

But before that summer of love, the countless shows they've played since, or being named "Best R&B Soul Funk Band" and "Best New Band" at the Fort Collins Musicians Association's Music Awards, the stars aligned one winter night...

Kelly Keeler (acoustic guitar player and vocalist) texted her friend Ben Prytherch (bassist) to come check out the Kris Lager Band at Hodi's Half Note. While enjoying the show, Prytherch got a call from his pal Ken Monks (guitarist) who said he just proved the mathematical theorem he'd been working on for his dissertation for the past 6 months. "I want to get a drink to celebrate, where are you?" Monks asked. Prytherch convinced him to come down to Hodi's as there was a great show going on. In the middle of the set, the band invited their friend Laniece Schleicher up on stage to sing a slow blues song.

"As soon as she started singing, Ken and I were dumbfounded and began giggling like idiots," Prytherch remembers. (This event is on YouTube). After the show, Prytherch and Monks awkwardly cornered Schleicher and asked her to start a band with them. She agreed. The three started practicing together and expanded the band to include several talented musicians through a series of random connections and coincidences.

"None of us had any real musical connection- we all just knew each other through life things that have nothing to do with music and somehow came together," says Prytherch.

The band's name stems from Schleicher's nickname, 'Lenny,' and the fact that she is a mom. The "remedy" portion came to Keeler and Schleicher in a flash of insight while watching The Patti Fiasco and talking about ancient cures at last year's New West Fest. The name stuck and the following year the band performed at the very same show. You could say it was foreshadowed by Keeler's "We'Moon" astrological datebook where



Schleicher's 2012 horoscope read: "Unexpected opportunities bring unpredictable adventures. Events bring you a new soul group with possibilities that could not have happened even with all the planning in the world."

The band's electrifying stage presence, palpable energy, and unique bond is evident even over coffee. Conversations are regularly punctuated by spontaneous fits of hysterical laughter. They finish one another's sentences and collectively feed off everyone's jokes- truly like they were meant to be.

"We always have so much fun," sums up vocalist Amanda Ernst. The easy friendship and wealth of creative talent led to the development of a successful songwriting process that enabled them to begin recording almost immediately.

"Everyone brings something different," says drummer Jeff Blayney. Songs seamlessly take on a life of their own within the supportive group dynamic and each track contains a combination of collaborations.

Their unique and powerful sound caught the ear of Darren Radach, owner of Stout Studios, who recorded their debut album. "Right away I knew this was something new and original," said Radach. "These guys are good."

Impressed by how quickly and efficiently they managed to pull off recording an album he added, "They are serious about their music and they work well together, you don't always see that in a studio setting." Radach was especially blown away when Schleicher nailed the song "Skin" in one take on an afternoon when everyone was ready to go home for the day.

"I really enjoy writing songs with this band," says trumpet player Greta Cornett. "A lot of times when people write a song, they feel so much ownership over it that it's hard for them to let it go, but [with this band] it's not like that. And I've never been in a band with so many girls before, I love it when we all get ready together before a show."

The other girls agree. "Not to negate the guys

**Mama Lenny and the Remedy is:**  
Laniece "Mama Lenny" Schleicher- Lead Vocals

Thalia Stevenson- Keys and Vocals

Amanda Ernst- Vocals

Kelly Keeler- Acoustic Guitar and Vocals

Greta Cornett- Trumpet

Ben Prytherch- Bass

Ken Monks- Guitar

Jeff Blayney- Drums

**Upcoming Shows:**

- Old Town Zombie Ball, Aggie Theater  
October 20th 10:00 p.m.

- A Black Sabbath Halloween, Road 34  
October 26th 9:00 p.m.

because they are extremely important, but there is something so empowering about being up there with these ladies- to show others how important it is to have your girls," says Schleicher.

The band's infectious camaraderie extends out to the community. "I feel super fortunate that we are musicians here in Fort Collins because we have been supported and encouraged the entire way. People here have given us so many opportunities and we're lucky to have such great audiences everywhere we play," says Schleicher.

"Fort Collins loves good music and loves their locals," adds Thalia Stevenson, on keys and vocals.

The band's current goals include getting to work on recording their second album, playing more out-of-area shows, and just enjoying the ride. "Every show we play becomes the best show we've ever played," says Keeler.

Call it chemistry, creative sparks, fate, or whatever. It all adds up and somehow, mysteriously, just works. As Prytherch says, "[Creating music] is one of those things you just keep working through and when the magic hits, everyone knows it." ●