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in North America! Also, 'silk' is the term for a feature in tonewood that you only see when a piece of wood is cut really well, so that's where I got the name from."

It makes perfect sense, of course, that not only is Finch responsible for contributing to the manufacture of lovely guitars, but she also plays them. A singer-songwriter in the folk-roots mould, Finch is attracting plenty of attention for her original material - so much so that her song *The Garden* received a nomination for Roots Song of the Year at this year's Vancouver Island Music Awards (VIMA).

"Receiving that nomination was very humbling and extremely exciting," said Finch. "Just to be included and counted among such incredible talent is amazing, and it's taken some really patient and encouraging people to put me in this place. It all started with mom, as she was my # 1 fan; when I'd play a song sitting around a campfire she would tell people, 'Ssshhh, my daughter is playing!'"

Attending the VIMA 10th Anniversary Gala evening at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Victoria on March 22 was a thrill for Finch. Up against a strong group of nominees in her category, she did not win on this occasion - the top prize going to Judy & Bruce Wing's *Miss Your Exit* - but Finch had a wonderful time at the event, gaining a lot of confidence from the experience. With her debut album, *Blue Silk*, featuring *The*

*Garden*, ready for release as we go to press, the nomination and gala could not have come at a better time.

"I took my young son Jordan, who was my date for the evening, and he was positive I was going to win!" chuckles Finch. "He said, 'I'm going to walk you up to the stage, but which arm do you want me to take?' The energy there was so good and everyone was so kind and open. That might have something to do with the songwriting aspect; songwriters are open books, and their songs are often about them, and their life experiences. It's where the best songs come from - things that you know, understand or, of course, don't understand."

Finch's own approach to songwriting started not with the exploration of words and rhymes, but with images. "When I was younger, I used to use pictures, paintings; I used to be able to write a song from everything I gleaned from one painting. Now I depend on my own experiences, because that's what I know the most, and my influences are mostly classic songwriters, really. First and foremost is John Denver; the very first song I ever learned was *Take Me Home Country Roads*. That would be followed closely by Gordon Lightfoot's *Pussywillows*, *Cat-Tails*, and I still love *Heart* - their harmonies and guitar playing are inspirational. As I got older and maybe a little more edgy I got into artists like *Melissa Etheridge*, then I got into blues, including Canadian greats like *Steve Strongman*."

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