

## Meet the Artist: Shay Sully

By Kelly Keenan, SACA

Photos courtesy of the artist

Vocalist Shay Sully burst onto the Southbury music scene with her debut in 2023 at the Rathskeller, performing during Southbury's very first Make Music Day. We recently had a chance to catch up and learn a bit more about her journey. From an unexpected moment in a middle school guitar class to releasing her first EP, Shay's story reflects how unexpected beginnings can lead to something truly special.

### How did you get started as a vocalist?

"I actually thought singing and music was weird," she says. "I was a jock and loved everything athletic, so music never crossed my mind." That changed in seventh grade guitar class. "We had to take either guitar or choir, so I chose guitar. My teacher, Thomas Surat, heard me singing along while I played and asked me to perform a Beatles song in front of the class. After that, he signed me up for choir, and the rest is history."

### How has your musical style evolved over time?

"I started my singing journey with Musical Theatre back in high school, which I then went on to study in college," Shay explains. "But when I began gigging in 2023, I found my love for Pop/Rock music, which is primarily what I sing now."

### Who are some of your biggest musical influences?

"Justin Bieber has always been my favorite artist, so a lot of my love and passion for music comes from being a fan of his for so long," she says. Vocally, she draws inspiration from a wide range of artists. "I'm definitely influenced by Heart, Lawrence, Renee Rapp, and Billie Eilish. If I could ever collaborate with any of these artists, my life would be complete!"

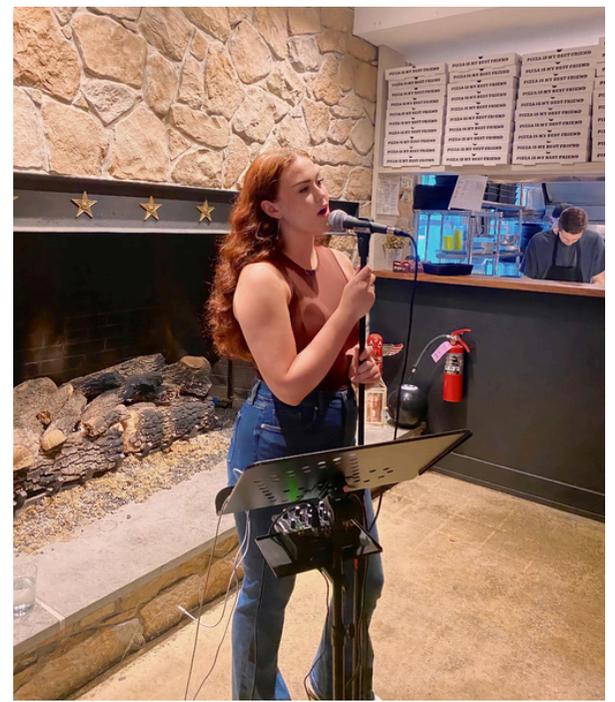
### Do you prefer performing covers or original music?

"I just released my first EP on January 10th, so I've been loving singing my own music for once," Shay says. "But I am a sucker for a cover. My gigs primarily consist of covers until I get more of my own original material out there."

### What does your pre-show preparation look like?

"I honestly don't do much to prepare aside from making my setlist," she admits. "I try to make sure my day is as restful and stress-free as possible—and drink lots of water!"





### What does performing locally mean to you?

"It means giving back to a place that has given myself and my family so much," Shay says. "Performing locally feels so personal. These are the people who've supported me from the start, or even seen me grow up, so sharing my music with them is incredibly special."

### Why do local arts matter so much to a community?

"Local arts create connections," she explains. "They give people something to rally around, support, and feel proud of. It gives people a place to express themselves where they might not otherwise be able to—especially when it's coming from their own community."

### What keeps you motivated to perform?

"My love for music and art is what keeps me going," Shay says. "It's such a rewarding challenge to put yourself out there—not just with live performances, but with original music too."

### Where do you hope your music takes you next?

"I'm hoping to collaborate with a full band in the near future and create an album—or albums—that really capture my sound," she says. "Hopefully that leads to touring and connecting with new audiences."

### Do you have a favorite song to sing live?

"My favorite song to sing live is Barracuda by Heart," Shay says. "It's one of the few songs out there that I think perfectly fits my voice." As for a least favorite? "That depends on the day, how my voice is feeling, and the vibe of the gig—but I never absolutely despise performing any song on my set lists."





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## What's the most unexpected place you've ever performed?

"I performed at a retired nun convent," she says. "It was a very interesting venue, but they were all adorable and kind—and it ended up being a very rewarding experience."

## Finally, what advice would you give to aspiring vocalists or artists?

"Be patient and stay consistent," Shay says. "It's okay to be scared—that usually means you care and you're putting in the work. Perform as much as you can, don't be afraid to put yourself out there, and trust that your voice and sound will grow with you."

## Where to Find Her:

### Apple Music:

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/somebody-ep/1865222093>

### Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/6jdy4coJxCgWuX5us7sQ3i?si=ADHIJJg2Q9-wBx3yHYUSwg>

### Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/shaysullyproductions/>

### Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpndfhHiauSbN Ggf-Qwfopg>

### TikTok:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@shay.sully>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61566190570590>



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