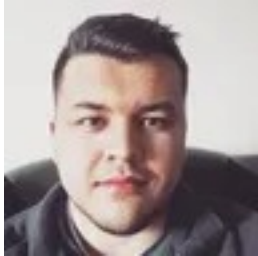


## MUSIC

# Ionia native turns to music to cope with traumatic brain injury



**Evan Sasiela**

Ionia Sentinel-Standard

IONIA — Eight months after suffering a brain injury, Caitlin Cusack struggled with her rehabilitation and wondered how she could get back the time she'd lost.

Those thoughts spawned the first song from her upcoming debut EP.

The Ionia native will release her new song “Quiet My Mind” on March 24. It will be available on all streaming platforms worldwide. The song’s release coincides with Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Cusack will release another song, “California Spring,” in April. She'll drop her debut, five-track EP — also titled “Quiet My Mind” — on May 19.

“I’m really excited to share the songs that have been really meaningful to me in the last few years, finally,” Cusack told The Sentinel-Standard.

Cusack said her new song was inspired by how she was feeling eight months after suffering a brain injury in May 2018, when she hit her head on her birthday. A year later, again on her birthday, her mother, Mary, died of cancer. Her father, Dan, died in June 2016 of Multiple System Atrophy, a rare neurodegenerative disorder.

“I was feeling lost and grieving the life I had lived before my brain injury,” Cusack said.



Photo by Ashlee Watson Photography

Cusack called “Quiet My Mind” the first song that “spurred everything else.” She wrote the song at the piano and recorded it as a pop tune in January.

“I always wanted it to be something that’s really accessible to people,” Cusack said. “I hope this shimmery pop production of it makes people turn their heads or give a closer listen because they may not have listened if it was me at a keyboard in the first place. I’m excited for people to hear it.”

Cusack hopes her song will raise awareness for brain injuries, including what can happen when your symptoms don’t resolve quickly afterward. She plans to share treatment providers and resources in blog posts on her website: [caitlincusackmusic.com](http://caitlincusackmusic.com).

“I think it plagues a lot more people in the world than we’ve ever realized,” Cusack said. “Research is really starting to show how much we should pay attention to this.”

Cusack graduated from Ionia High School in 2010. Last summer, she performed original songs at the Ionia Free Fair Floral Building in front of old friends and new fans.

“It was so fun to share my music with them,” she said.

Cusack in May 2022 released her debut single “I’ll Be Okay,” which was inspired by her brain injury and the loss of her parents.

On March 24, Cusack will perform 6-9 p.m. at Beer City Bread Co. in Grand Rapids. She'll also have an EP release concert at Midtown at Studio Park in Grand Rapids on May 19. Ticket information will be posted online in the coming weeks.

— *Contact reporter Evan Sasiela at [esasiela@sentinel-standard.com](mailto:esasiela@sentinel-standard.com). Follow him on Twitter [@SalsaEvan](https://twitter.com/SalsaEvan).*

**More:** [Ionia native Caitlin Cusack releases debut single 'I'll Be Okay'](#)



Photos by Elle Lively