

Heather Nova interview

Since breaking through with Glow Stars in 1993, Bermudian singer-songwriter Heather Nova has enjoyed a prolific career, releasing a staggering 13 studio LPs, six EPs and even an album of poetry. Now 57, she recently unveiled her 13th long-player, *Breath And Air*, and kicks off a 27-date tour on 10 March, which culminates in April with performances in Bristol, Manchester and London.

This is your first album since 2022's *Other Shores*. What can you tell us about *Breath And Air*?

I don't set out with a theme in mind. This new album was written over the last few years, and my songs are just reflections of my thought processing during that period. I'm actually exploring similar themes in all my albums, often love and loss and longing and hope. It's those very broad themes, only I'm investigating and reflecting on them in different ways at each stage of my life.

How do you think you've grown as a songwriter over the years?

I think the silver lining to aging is that we gain a deeper understanding and we're able to self-reflect better. There's a lot of that on this album. It's an interesting age to be, in your 50s, because you've lived a lot, and you feel like you're getting older, but you also feel like there's a lot ahead. It's a really golden opportunity to learn from all my ineffective and not-so-helpful thought patterns and say, "Okay, there's still time to improve and transform."

Are you one of those songwriters who's always writing? There aren't many long gaps between your albums.

I love making music. If I had my way, I'd make an album once a year, but it's very expensive to go in the studio with a producer. But I'm writing all the time, and I'm also very much a live artist, that's always been really important to me. I think it's going to become even more important to everyone, things being more and more AI-generated, that's one thing they can't take away from us, a musician on stage is always going to be special and communal. There's this exchange of energy where the musician is giving a lot with the music, but then the crowd is giving a lot back. It's like this really nice feedback loop.

So you still like going on tour after all these years?

It's really hard to leave my dog, but I really like the contrast, the variety of life. I like being where I am but then going out into the world and taking my music out there, to me that's where the magic really happens.

It must be a great feeling, when you have a new album, to go out with new songs to perform?

It is, but I almost have too many songs now! I have 13 albums, and so it's really hard to choose just 90 minutes of material for a set. But yeah, I'm excited to play the new stuff live.

You recorded this album in Devon. Was that a part of the UK you were familiar with?

I lived in the UK for 14 years, it's where I started my career back in the 90s. I knew it fairly well, but I was really thrilled that the producer that I wanted to work with, Chris Bond, had a studio in the depths of the countryside, because I love being immersed in nature when I record. It's like being in this bubble where the outside world ceases to exist. You're there from 10am till midnight every day for weeks on end and you're just looking out at the fields and the changing colours of the sky.

You used to live in London, but then returned to live in Bermuda. Why was that?

I came back here when my son was born. I just wanted him to grow up running barefoot and exploring the shorelines.

Your son is 21 now. Does he show any interest in going into the music business?

No, both his parents are musicians, so I think he needed to carve his own path. But I know he's very naturally musical so I'm hoping!

You've achieved so much in your career. Do you have any ambitions left?

I don't have any big master plan. I'm really a take one day at a time kind of person. It's really important to me to just be present. What was it Sinéad O'Connor said? "I do not want what I haven't got". I just feel very, very grateful for what's happening right now.

Apart from songwriting, what else fills your time?

I mentor young artists, so I discover and encourage these young singer-songwriters here in Bermuda. Also I'm on the board of this new Bermuda festival that we're putting together, so I stay pretty active in the community.

The new album has just come out, but have you already started on record number 14?

I had way too many songs for this album, so I could make a whole other album right now. But also there are all these song fragments on my phone that I need to go through. I have about 300 of those in my voice memos and the scary thing is there's probably some really good ones that I'll never finish!

Breath And Air is out now via V2 Records. More tour dates, head to: www.heathernova.com