

Agenda

ROCK STEADY

Melissa Etheridge lives for music. Growing up in Kansas in the '60s and '70s, she loved listening to hits on the radio and discovering artists on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. She started playing the guitar at age 8 and went on to perform in cover bands as a teenager. After moving to California, she scored a record deal and released her eponymous debut album in 1988, which earned her the first of many Grammy nominations. Today, Etheridge shares music with her children, uses songwriting to cope with hardships, and continues to tour with a guitar in one hand and a harmonica in the other. She arrives at the **Kravis Center** November 28 to perform songs from her 2008 holiday album and hits from her decades-long career. *PBI* spoke with her about her craft. (561-832-7469, kravis.org) —Mary Murray

PBI: You've been a mainstay of the rock music scene for 30 years. What's your secret?

Etheridge: My fans have always appreciated my music because it comes from my heart. It's a piece of me and it's a way of expressing my life journey, and some people can relate to that. Staying true to myself, making the music I love, and also presenting and performing has kept me in the ring.

What went into your decision to write and perform holiday music?

I had gone through breast cancer and had a real awakening personally in my own spiritual evolution and evolution as a person. It was a subject that I wanted to put into a piece of work, and I felt a Christmas and holiday album would be the perfect opportunity. The holiday spirit is not a religious thing for me but more of a feeling and a thoughtful time. *A New Thought for Christmas* has some of my favorite songs [and] I wanted to put together a show where I could do these songs and share them with people.

In June, you recorded a song in response to the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando. What makes songwriting a good coping mechanism for you?

Boy, I don't know where I'd be without songwriting. It's a way to get the thoughts and the feelings that are inside of me out. You put them out there and share them and realize you're not alone in that thought or that feeling. I write to heal myself and, in doing so, I feel like maybe it can heal others, too.



WE CHAT WITH ETHERIDGE
ABOUT HER LATEST ALBUM
AND HER ADVOCACY WORK AT
PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM/
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