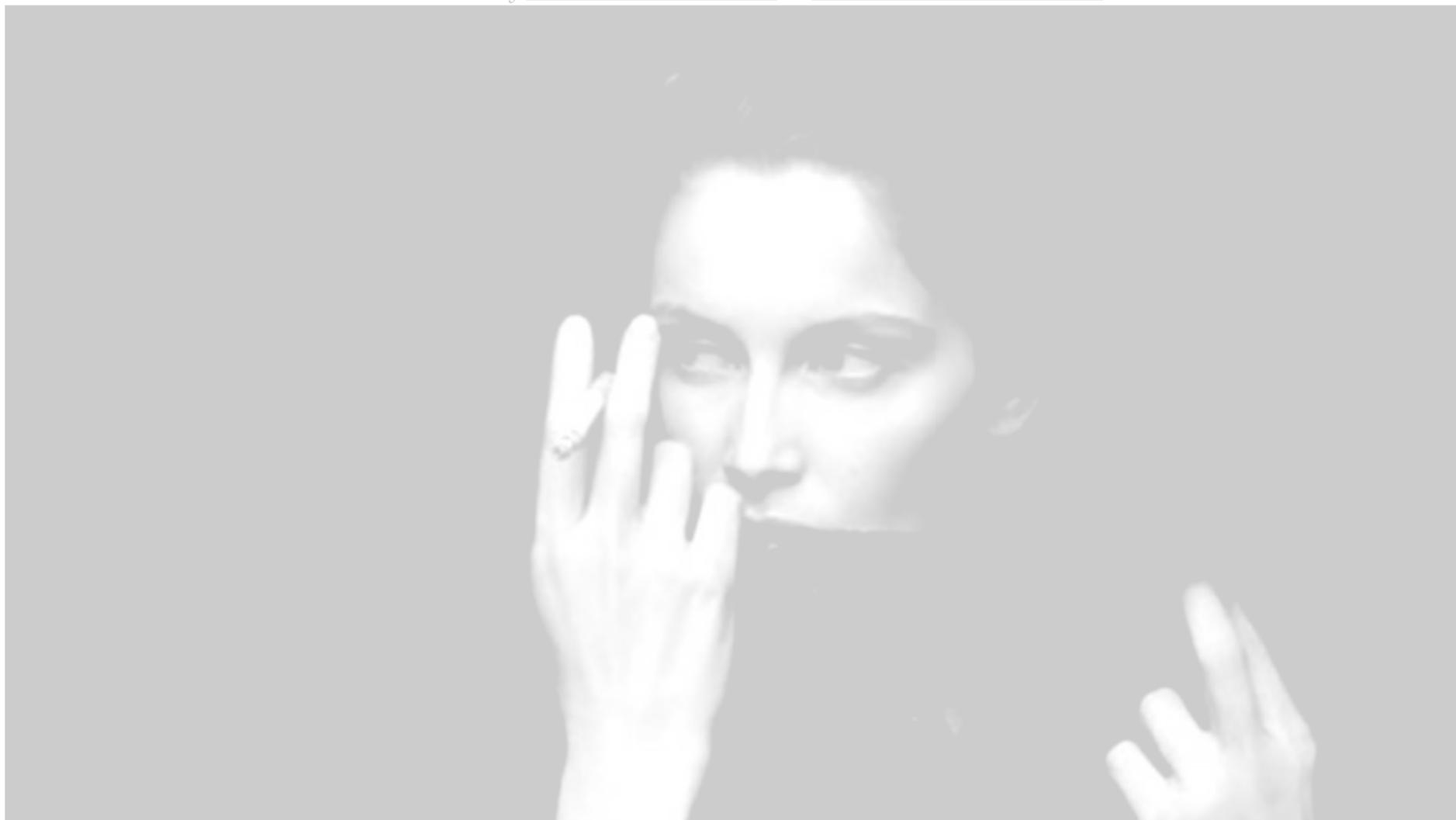


Tête-à-tête With Singer-Songwriter Beth Hart, On Her Upcoming India Tour, Her Music, And More

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Like any great piece of art, Beth Hart's bodies of work latch on you. Her music (we feel) is life personified – strange, twisting, emotional, fulfilling, but with all that, it's lined with a sense of joy that keeps on giving. We still remember the first time we heard her on *Seesaw* (and countless other, after that) – you know the moment when you feel so much joy, you can't really explain it? That's how we felt.

In Bruce Lee's interview with Pierre Berton (1971), there is a phase where he goes 'martial arts to me is expressing yourself fully, without lying to oneself... but, it's a hard thing to do, so you have to train your reflexes, so that when you want it, it's there' This is the kind of expression her music reminds us of, for sure it comes from a place of higher power. Further, a music magazine once called her the 'Rock 'n' Queen', but after reading her responses, we now know that she is not here for the high life, she is here just for the music, and to live, and love the people, who love her back!

We catch up with Hart, who tells me more about performing in India for the first time (Bangalore – courtesy [Total Environment Music Foundation](#) (<https://www.facebook.com/TEMusicFoundation/>) on 22 April), her insights on her music, her insecurities, working with Joe Bonamassa and much more.

It's been four years since you haven't dropped *Seesaw*, what are your thoughts when you look back at it now, good memories you would like to share? Will we see a part 3 of the Beth Hart and Joe Bonamassa collaboration in the near future?

I've made quite a few records since *Seesaw* and yes that was four years ago. Yes, Joe and I are working on a third now and I think it's going to be wonderful again. Kevin Shirley is an amazing producer and clearly, Joe is brilliant and they are always a great duo to play on the record too and they are a really great band, so I think it's going to be another good one.

This is your first time playing in India, what is your game plan like – the setlist and your expectations from the tour?

I never make a setlist before I get to the gig. So, when I get on tour, every show is a different show. I would be bored out of my mind doing the same show every night, I have never done that and will never do that. The band knows 11 of my records, so any song I want to pull out, (including the Joe records), any song we want to pull out we can, sometimes we rehearse in through a little bit during soundcheck, if we need to. We always do a soundcheck and it's a great thing to come together and warm up. But getting to come to India, for the first time, is going to be fantastic! I could not believe when my manager told me that we are going to get to go there, I was absolutely thrilled about it. I don't know a lot of the history of India, but I do know a bit about some of the spiritual things there, which have always been beautiful to me and the food is phenomenal, I love Indian food. My sister's been to India a lot, and she absolutely adores it, I'm really looking forward to it, it's going to be great.

What are your views on religion and spirituality?

I'm really open-minded. I'm a Christian and believe in Jesus, but I also believe in Buddha and Allah. I don't at all condemn or look down on people who consider themselves to be atheists. I think life is a journey and all of us are doing the best that we can because it's not easy being in love. It's filled with blessings and joy, but it is also filled with tragedy and difficulty. So of course, it's going to challenge all of us spiritually, mentally and physically. I'm just really open-minded to supporting others and whatever it is that they believe in or don't believe in, and it's not up to me to tell people what they should or should not do. I'm trying to get through my life the best I can too, so the last thing I'm going to do is tell somebody else how to live their life.

Yes, I meditate, I read the bible, I read other spiritual books as well, on Buddhism and what not. I also go to church, I don't agree with everything they say in my church, for example, I don't believe anybody is going to hell if they don't do things a certain way. I don't believe in that at all. But yes, God is everything to me, I talk to him all day long and he gets me through when I am scared or when I'm happy, I get to tell him how thankful I am. When I write songs, I feel like I'm with him or higher beings and people who have passed on and songwriting is a spiritual experience for me. So, God is really everything to me. I think that if I did not have a connecting or the need, I would have given up on living a really long time ago.

Is being famous scary?

No, because I'm not famous. I think that life is like beauty, it's in the eyes of the beholder. I think that your perception of everything is going to affect you completely and it's funny because I was swimming today and I was thinking about my old bass player Tao and how we had a disagreement with each other. And the disagreement was that he said reality is that life is tragic and horrible, and I said that reality is beautiful and miraculous, filled with love and new experiences every day. He said you don't live reality, but a dream world and I said isn't reality just like beauty, it's in the eye of the beholder. So, whatever it is you see or believe or feel, is your reality. Yes, so I know that I'm not famous and maybe to some people in their mind I am, but most people don't know who I am, that's for sure. I did not get into the industry to get famous, I got into it because I wanted to feel like I was a part of the world, I wanted to feel like I was a part of mankind and growing up I felt like an outsider because of my mental illness and addiction has made me somehow lesser of a human being, I don't fit in.

I'm just sharing with you what my deep fears and insecurities are. I think music and songwriting for me was a way to communicate with God, but then to perform for people and play with other musicians is a way for me to connect with the world. And not feel alone or like an outsider. When it comes to fame, I remember when I was 20, I read this lovely book called [The Tao Of Leadership \(http://www.amazon.in/Tao-Leadership-Tzus-Ching-Adapted/dp/0893340790\)](http://www.amazon.in/Tao-Leadership-Tzus-Ching-Adapted/dp/0893340790), based on Japanese philosophy on God and it said, 'beware of fame for it will single you out, separate you from the light, truth and from others'. When I look at people who are 'famous' famous, people who have paparazzi chasing them down the street or they can't go to 7/11 and get a pack of cigarettes, people who can't go to the local spot to have a cup of coffee, I always pray that they are happy in that, they are able to handle that. For me, I know that that would kill me, I already feel like an outsider. So, famous or not, that's not on my list.

A thing or things you miss from your younger days?

Maybe being prettier. Looking cuter naked in front of the mirror. Yes, I miss that sometimes, for sure. Having a super tight firm little figure, even though I really never had one, but I think I thought I did when I was younger. So yeah, maybe something like that. Otherwise, not really, I'm really enjoying getting older and I love being married, and I love how my perception of my family has changed so much since I have gotten older and my perception of myself as a younger person has improved a lot. My outlook has changed so much since I've gotten older, so I quite enjoy being older, other than not looking as great naked in front of the mirror.

Is technology changing the way we look at music?

It's not changed in the way that I look at music, I can't really speak for anybody else. Music is music, there's nothing that can really change it. In terms of new genres being born, well, of course. There are going to be people in places in the world, that are going through great suppression, and those tend to be the places with comes up with a whole new set of things. A wonderful saying is that 'necessity is the mother of all invention' and I love that saying. Seems like all the pockets in the world which are being really suppressed, if they have a way to get their hands on an instrument or a piece of paper and a pen, then wonderful poetry will come from it. Wonderful new music will come from it. Wonderful new things will come from it because the pain and the suffering forces you to find something beautiful, otherwise you give up on living and I think that's what's great about music. In terms of technology, I don't give it that much power, the greatest power is going to come from a living thing, a living animal, a living human being, things like the ocean, the winds, the stars. Technology certainly has its place and has most certainly done its thing and we'll have to see what comes in the future, but I don't give it that much credit.

Has the music industry changed since the time you started?

Well yeah, of course. It's changed a lot and it's always changing, since the beginning of the music industry and it'll continue to do so. But I have not minded it much, probably because I never was a big pop star or I didn't have to go through the whole 'oh my god everybody is downloading my music', so it hasn't really freaked me out or anything. In fact, I think things like YouTube have been helpful in that. If people come across what I've done, they can view shows or they can look at interviews or they can listen to music that I'm releasing and I think that's kind of a nice thing.

What is it that inspires you to push yourself as an artist?

I think trying to search for the truth, that's what pushes me. Even though I'm afraid of the truth, specifically if I have a lot of walls of denial around me then I can be in a false sense of security. For instance, if I can pretend that when my father left when I was a kid didn't hurt me, that's a false wall which could keep me from feeling about it. But, if I'm willing to write about it and willing to face it, and you face it the demon a couple of times and you see that the demon is not killing you, it won't. It might kill you to pretend that it's not there, but it won't face you to kill it. So, you face it over and over again, whether you see a therapist or you talk about it at church or you talk about it to your best friend, or you talk about it to an audience or when you're writing a song or a poem or when you're painting. So, when you paint the darkness on the canvas you're facing it, you're saying that it cannot kill you and that to me is the most awesome thing about art, it's a way to heal and really face your demons. And see that it's killing you, but it's making you stronger.

All the things you do musically has so much soul. Where does it come from?

Well, I guess it comes from you, the person who thinks that. Think about it, if you think that my music is soulful I can guarantee you that there is someone who thinks that it's not. So, who's right and who's wrong?

Again, I always go back to that beauty and art, love is life, beauty is all in the eyes of the beholder.

How do you want people to remember you?

Oh God, I don't know. If someone does, it's meant to be and if someone doesn't then that's meant to be. I just want to try to not hurt people. I don't really care if anyone remembers me. I just want to not hurt people or myself. I just want to leave some love behind and some truth, I guess. I don't think anyone remembering me really matters. I think what matters is I remember that life is a gift and it's okay to be broken or whatever. It's okay to be yourself and I'm trying to learn that. What really matters then is that I remember that I'm blessed to be alive and that when this life is over it's never over its just a new form that's going to come into being. Maybe I'll get to be a star up in the sky in my next life or a breeze that goes by a child's hair when they are sitting at the edge of a beach and wishing their life could be better, making them feel better. That's the kind of thing I like to think about, life is so precious that it really never ends, it just changes form.

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