

Fear and television

Pitching new tunes for film and TV, Heather Evans overcomes a songwriter's dilemma



BY MOZES ZARATE / mozesz@newsreview.com

"That's all you can do, is just move things forward even though you feel afraid," Evans says.

She released her first song, "By My Side," in March. Evans' soft-light voice travels through reverb-laden acoustic guitar, harp and kicks. The song is being pitched for a Hallmark movie.

"By My Side" recommends not going alone, and as the co-leader of the Sacramento Songwriter Circle, Evans lives the lyrics. Through monthly meet-ups and showcases in the basement of Fig Tree Coffee, Art, & Music Lounge in Roseville, about 35

local musicians reveal their unfinished work in a safe environment. The most fulfilling part is watching each artist bloom in confidence, Evans says.

"They're getting better at their craft and not listening to the inner critic as much," she says.

Her song No. 2, "Anything's Possible," is gentle encouragement bathed in a cloud of warm synth. It released April 4, and if her dream goes exactly as planned, you'll hear it the moment an *America's Got Talent* judge strikes the approval buzzer.

Each song tackles an uncharted topic, but the whole represents Evans' new "season of life." When she released her first CD at 17 and first full-length album at 19, the songs were mostly introspective therapy, she says. That changed after she had a miscarriage in 2008.

"Something happened to me. I shut down emotionally, musically," Evans says. Her next two albums, *Songs of Healing* and *Out of Woods*, were intended for parents who lost children, or listeners wrestling with depression.

"I saw a shift in my songwriting from those CDs," she says. "And people were reaching out to me and saying, 'Heather, this has gotten me through the worst season of my life.'"

With nine songs left to go to reach her goal, Evans is in her "season of empowerment."

"Diving into this and going after it, it frees me up creatively," she says. "I can just be crazy. I don't have to just be Heather Evans. I can create whatever I want."

Check out Heather Evans at Concerts in the Park Friday, May 3 at Cesar Chavez Plaza. Show starts at 5 p.m. Joy & Madness, Simple Creation, and DJ Eddie Z also perform. Follow the Sacramento Songwriter Circle at Facebook. com/sacsongwritercircle.

You could be hearing a Heather Evans song when judges hit the buzzer on *America's Got Talent*.

Heather Evans imagines her next song, "Glass Ceiling," would fit swimmingly in a mermaid drama. The women's empowerment anthem will be darker than her usual calm-drive acoustic pop. When ready, she'll pitch it to the producers of *Siren*, a television show set in a small fishing town terrorized by water nymphs.

The Sacramento musician is making a deep dive into writing music for film and TV, a market where eyes are kept colorless in lyrics to match any audience, Los Angeles talent agents are sick of love songs and new music is in high demand.

Evans hopes the music and lyrics of "Glass Ceiling" ("Can't hold me down / Can't put me out") will front-line an epic moment onscreen. Or it'll at least move her closer toward a personal goal: writing 12 songs in 12 months. "Glass Ceiling" will be her third, and after bouts with depression, anxiety and some therapeutic albums over the past decade, she's looking outward to write songs for other people. She's never felt more sure of her calling.

"I am hopeful that my music is a light in dark places for people," she says.

Last year, her song "20 Years From Now" played during a heart-wrenching interview on *So You Think You Can Dance?* Her 2017 tune "Mom Life" appeared twice in *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors* and went semi-viral on Facebook, gathering more than 40,000 views and a handful of shares on popular mom blogs.

The successes are an antidote to what Evans and other local songwriters often experience: crippling fear and self-doubt. Her blog is a hopeful reminder to "Do it afraid," as she puts it.

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