

THE **RockWired** ON-LINE EXCLUSIVE

"We cannot describe sound, but we cannot forget it either" - IGOR STRAVINSKY

SO FRICKIN' BLESSED
SARAH HETHCOAT TALKS TO ROCKWIRED
ABOUT HER DEBUT E.P. 'NOBODY LIKES A
BULLY'
WORKING WITH PRODUCER DAVE COBB
AND MAKING MUSIC ON HER OWN TERMS



INTERVIEWED BY BRIAN LUSH

Clearly I caught singer songwriter SARAH HETHCOAT during a flurry of activity. She talks a thousand words a minute about the electronic release of her latest E.P., the curiously titled 'NOBODY LIKES A BULLY' and of the series of live shows that her and her band have done throughout Los Angeles and the hope of taking the act on the road within the next couple of months. After listening to "NOBODY..", HETHCOAT's excitement seems well deserved. With only six songs, HETHCOAT kicks things off with the teasing mid sixties sounding beat rocker 'I HATE YOU' and the slamming mid tempo pop of 'I GOT YOU'. With 'GONE', HEATHCOAT displays a rather lovely LAURA NYRO-styled urgency, and 'LOVE TRAP' showcases a SHERYL CROW type narrative of nightlife gone right. Produced by DAVE COBB (CHRIS CORNELL, BLACK

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REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB), 'NOBODY...' - according to HETHCOAT - is only a taste of things to come. "DAVE just offered a totally amazing perspective for me." says HETHCOAT "Once we got together in the studio the whole process was just honest and organic and we didn't over think anything. It was just a lot of fun. It was a really cool recording experience with no drama. It was really fun and honest and we knew right from the get go, what we were going to do. We wrote a couple of tunes and had a lot of fun. We were like two kids in a playground. It was a lot of fun and I can't wait to do it again."

ROCKWIRED spoke with SARAH HETHCOAT over the phone. Here is how it went.

For some reason I keep thinking that I've heard of you before the release of NOBODY LIKES A BULLY. Did you release anything prior to that?

I had a few things here and there (The E.P.s 'PROSODY' in 2007 and 'FACES' in 2008) but 'NOBODY LIKES A BULLY' is the first thing that we're actually pushing. Before it was me doing things on MYSPACE and stuff like that. It wasn't super serious but now, we're really getting the music out there.

A couple of nights ago, I was little tipsy after dinner and I was YOUTUBE-ing some PAT BENATAR videos and I came across this acoustic performance of you singing HEARTBREAKER.

Yeah.

It was quite accidental. I had no intention of seeking you out but I did. It was pretty cool!

That's pretty cool. That was a lovely suggestion from my lovely friends that are helping me market myself. They're like 'SARAH, you need an internet presence!' so I've just gone along with it. I grew up in musical theater so I can pretty much sing anything I think so I asked my guitar player MIKE if he would want to do some covers for YOUTUBE. So I got together some favorite songs of mine and we just did it. It's funny because I never use my YOUTUBE account but people watch it and they respond to it.

What is the status of the release of 'NOBODY LIKES A BULLY'?

It's been released online which has been really cool. It has been a long journey and I certainly wouldn't be here without a lot of wonderful friends and support. The E.P. has been released digitally and it can be purchased at i-TUNES. It's the first time where I felt that things were done right. Life is an experience and a journey. I continue to get better and I continue to get closer to what it is that I want to do. I'm just proud of this E.P. on multiple levels and I'm grateful to everyone that helped. This project is the most 'me' that I've ever been and now with the live shows, it's getting to be really exciting.

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Who is all in your live band?

I'm so frickin blessed it's ridiculous! I've definitely played with a lot of different amazing players. Right now I'm working with great people. I have a guy named JOE CORCORAN from Canada who is doing guitar and he's helping me with guitar which is funny because I usually playing a lot of piano but I'm playing guitar in the band too which is pretty cool. Most of the guys that I've played with are hardcore studio musicians who know their way around a studio, but the people that I'm working with right now are not only good in the studio but they are good performers as well. We're all headed in the same direction musically. I have LESTER who is my drummer. He has just moved back to Virginia. He'll come back when it's time to tour but we're going to have another drummer in the meantime named JAMIE who is incredible as well and I've got JARED playing bass. They are all great guys and MATT is playing keys and auxiliary stuff. There is lot of energy and everybody is having fun and everybody loves the music and that is what I come from. I'm a natural live performer and that was the only thing that I knew how to do going into this. We can put on a very strong live show and we're finally at the point where we've got a great group of material to work with and I've got the players that are into it. It's an exciting live show for sure.

Is this E.P. a taste of larger work on the horizon?

Yeah. That is the plan and the goal. I can't tell you any exact dates at the moment, but absolutely. That's just the way I roll and that is why the live shows are so exciting for me. It's one thing to hear the songs on this E.P. but they definitely get taken to the next level when they are performed live.

What made you want to get into music in the beginning?

For me, I consider myself a musician second. My gift is taking a body of work and delivering it and being present in it and owning it. That is what I love about songwriting and storytelling. I take an experience that is true to me and put it into song in the verse/chorus format and from there, I build this body of work that is just solid on every level down to the words which always means something to me. I grew up doing musical theater and whenever I was on stage, people would be drawn to my energy and people would pay attention. In all honesty, I wasn't totally into musical theater. It really wasn't were I felt most honest. I wanted to tell my own stories. I'm inspired by the human condition and living life. My experiences aren't just true to me. They're true to you and they're true to everybody else and that is why I do it. Songwriting for me is like storytelling at it's finest. It's the only thing that feels right for me and makes sense for me.

What artists spoke to you growing up?

Without question, my greatest teachers were storytellers. I'm not like a brain surgeon songwriter. I pretty much say how I feel, so for me it was the storytellers of my parents generation that made an impact for me like CAROLE

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KING, JAMES TAYLOR, PAUL SIMON, and THE BEATLES. It goes on and on. There is also LAURA NYRO and JANIS IAN. When I got a little older I loved ALANIS MORISSETTE. People can say what they want, but I could listen to her entire album and I could understand what she was saying and where she was coming from. Same with FIONA APPLE's 'TIDAL' album. I knew it backwards and forwards. There was also LAURYN HILL. 'THE MISEDUCATION OF LAURYN HILL' was my favorite album. I listened to it and dissected the lyrics for months. I just became obsessed. It just seemed so easy to me. It seemed like it was the easiest thing in the world to do. From there, I just got it. I know a lot of people don't listen to lyrics or are even aware that they even listen to lyrics but my thing is if the song is good enough and the music is good enough, eventually they will get around to listening to the lyrics.

You're right. I don't think people hear lyrics all the time unless it's ELVIS COSTELLO or AIMEE MANN.

It depends on the individual. For me, it's one of the first things that I listen to but for many, it's not but if the song is hooky and catchy enough and it speaks to someone musically and it evokes an emotion or a feeling in them then it sticks around long enough, then they will be aware of the lyrics soon enough. I think it's a great thing.

How do songs get written for you?

It's totally different every time. It's very organic. I like to do a lot of co-writing. I write a lot of songs myself but co-writing is the most fun for me and I have a group of people that I trust and really like working with. I'll call my friend BRIAN and he'll come over for a while and what I do is I press record and we go from there. I always press record because when you don't, that is when you miss the diamonds. He'll play something on the guitar and it will just speak to me. It'll evoke an idea or stream of consciousness and we take it from there. We'll play and sing and I'll go and listen back and I hear what was going on and just let the stream of consciousness sort of speak. I don't know if any of this makes sense but to me it does.

Of the songs on this current E.P. which songs stand out for you at the moment and why?

I think this E.P. represents my evolution thus far. It's a culmination of a lot of life lessons. I've made a lot of mistakes. I've been knocked down and I've picked myself back up. With that being said, I think the song 'I GOT YOU' means a lot to me. It's just very honest, in-your-face, and raw. There is a message behind it. That one is probably the most powerful one to me for sure.

How have the live shows been going?

We've been doing shows around Los Angeles but what I'm really excited about is getting out there on the road which is hopefully going to happen in the next couple of months. Right now, it's just been about finding the right team for me

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but it's growing in tremendous amounts and a lot of people are coming out.

Who did you work with in putting this E.P. together?

I worked with DAVE COBB who is really amazing and he is partly the reason why I have the band that I have because everyone is connected through him. He's worked with everyone from CHRIS CORNELL to BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB to MELISSA ETHERIDGE. Right before he worked with me he worked with the OAK RIDGE BOYS. DAVE just offered a totally amazing perspective for me. Once we got together in the studio, the whole process was just honest and organic and we didn't over think anything. It was just a lot of fun. It was a really cool recording experience with no drama. It was really fun and honest and we knew right from the get go what we were going to do. We wrote a couple of tunes and had a lot of fun. We were like two kids in a playground. It was a lot of fun. I can't wait to do it again.

Who will be releasing this E.P.?

It's all independent. I'm not interested in losing my creative control. We worked really hard to build this thing. It's completely grass roots and that's the way that I think it needs to be done, especially in my situation.

You say there are advantages to grass roots-ing it. What are the disadvantages?

It just takes a little longer. I had no preconceived notions getting into this. I would be leery of anyone who would come up to me and say "That's it! You're signed and here's your huge advance and this is taken care of!" because I've had way too many friends that were signed to labels and they lose all of their control. The infrastructure of the music industry has completely changed. The people that were in power and making decisions aren't anymore, and I'm not willing to put my career in someone's hands who is going to be fired the next week so my record could be shelved for two years and I won't be able to do anything because I'm stuck in a contract. On your own, it takes a little longer and you have to think outside the box and to me, it's about focusing and creating the best product possible. I'm ready for the opportunities. It depends on who you are. I think some people just aren't willing to wait things out. Personally speaking, I wanted to work through it and because of it, I feel prepared for just about anything. It's not about being a big overnight success. I just want to tell my stories and do what I love and make people feel things.

What was the best bit of advice you were ever given - in life or in music?

I had a day job for a long time. I worked in the music industry and I know what it's like to walk in many people's shoes. I've been at the low end of the totem pole and people treat you like crap and I've been in other situations. I think the hardest thing for me to see when I worked in the music industry was to see people's spirits destroyed. There are a lot of bullies because it's corporate. Let's be real! It isn't about the music a lot of the time. I would see a lot of young assistants or young people working so hard and never being given the credit that they

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deserved. I never wanted to move up the industry the way that these young assistants did. I was only there to pay my bills. I guess what I learned is that no one can tell you what you are. I realized really early in life that I didn't care if the person next to me doesn't understand my dream or my vision or if they think I'm crazy to be pursuing this dream. Who are they to know? I think the most important thing you can do in whatever you do is accept who you are and be true to what that is. I think that takes a tremendous amount of courage and to not give power or energy to people around you who aren't necessarily able to understand. People are going to judge you and say things to you based on their own shit. So that is something that I've always believed in and lived by. I don't allow other people to tell me who I am because in the end it all works the way it's supposed to.

What would you like a person to come away after they've heard your E.P.

I want them to feel excited and I'd like for them to say 'I wanna see this girl!'.