



Music Spotlight: Heather Bambrick

Posted on February 3, 2017 By Dillon Collins Entertainment, Music

The opening line in Heather Bambrick's bio sums up the career of the transplanted Newfoundland jazz powerhouse quite magnificently. "Heather Bambrick has been wearing many hats for many years – and all of them fit her well!"

Too true. Bambrick may well be one of the most accomplished, yet under the radar, Newfoundland-born artists working today. Currently residing in Ontario, Bambrick counts singer-songwriter, voice actor, broadcaster, and educator among her many credits. It's a lengthy list that requires a steady hand, heart, and mind to navigate on a daily basis, yet this self-proclaimed go-getter lives with the philosophy of operating at one's full potential. With the release of her highly anticipated new solo recording, *You'll Never Know*, Bambrick has added yet another layer to an already astoundingly diverse career portfolio.

"I think it's getting harder as I get older," Bambrick shared with a laugh in a *Herald* interview, when posed the question of her mixed schedule. "When I was in my 20s it was really easy to handle a schedule like this. Now, all of a sudden, 3pm hits and I'm thinking: 'is it nap time yet?' From the time I was in high school, I was always 'go-go-go', and that just sort of carried into this period of my life. It means if one thing slows down, I always have another couple of balls up in the air, which can be both a good and a bad thing. There are those who say it's a lot harder to achieve success without concentrating 100% in one particular area. But, I've got bills to pay!"

Falling in love with jazz music, thanks to a mixture of influences from teachers, instructors, and her father, Bambrick embarked on a career path within the music scene here in Newfoundland that proved more exception than the rule, when looking at our more predominantly traditional music heritage. "My dad listened to jazz. He played saxophone for years in a dance band here in the city", she said. "The stuff he was listening to back then was a little 'old school', but jazz was always around. However, I didn't really connect with this kind of music until I started singing it. Then, quite honestly, after a few concerts singing a couple of jazz tunes, came a few trips to Fred's Records to pick up recordings from Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and Canadian artists like Holly Cole. That's when I really got into the music. It took singing a little jazz in a couple of choirs to really get me hooked, and from then on I was always looking for more!"

"I loved the freedom of jazz, because I think I felt, on some level, that I hadn't really studied to the same extent as other classical singers, so I was unprepared for that style of singing. For me, personally, jazz was more about emotion and expression, and less about 'technical singing'. But, because I'd learned proper technique while singing under the direction of such excellent choir directors, that developed naturally for me, and eventually the emotional side of the music dictated how I sang it, and allowed me a certain freedom of expression."

While Bambrick's career path did steer her away from her home province out of necessity, she has always been a proud standard-bearer when it comes to Newfoundland and Labrador, a fact she boasts proudly when pressed, often I might add, for curious questions mainlanders have of her home province. "People in Ontario have this crazy fascination with Newfoundland, and I love it," she says with a laugh. "I love talking about home! It's so funny how people are amazed by the talent that comes out of Newfoundland. If I get one question here, more than any other, it's 'how is it that such a small place has created so many talented people?' Whether it's political satirists, people doing things in theatre, or our musicians - I don't know what it is, but it's beautiful and I love it!"

Bambrick's first solo outing in years is 14-track crest of emotion. With highs and lows and a professional maturation that only comes from years of performing at the top of one's craft, *You'll Never Know* sees Bambrick operating at her finest. "I think it's the best record I've done so far. I'm really proud of it", Bambrick shared. "I'm proud of the arrangements, proud of the musicians I'm working with, and I'm proud of the roll that I – and my band mates - had in the project. It was truly a group effort, with everyone contributing, but if there was something I wanted I stood firmly for it. This record connects me to home more than anything I've ever done."

While her diversified career allows for little wiggle room to breathe at times, Bambrick has made a conscious effort to try to get back to performing more regularly in 2017 and onward. A high profile performance alongside the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in June serves as one of the highlights for the coming year, an engagement, she shared, that has the butterflies forming early. Bottom line, however, is this talented jazz chanteuse is making a point of bringing her music to as many listeners as possible in the very near future. "From here I just want to be able to take the music elsewhere and entertain people with it. It's not about making a lot of money or having any sort of fame. It's about wanting to take the show on the road, entertaining people with music and laughter, and sharing stories about Newfoundland - because that's what I do!"