

# Rebecca St. James embraces the 'Dawn'

New EP, podcast for returning singer

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For three decades, Rebecca St. James has lived her life based on the word of God.

But for a period of time a decade ago, she also found herself living out a Tom Petty song.

"The waiting is the hardest part," he famously said. "Every day you get one more yard/You take it on faith, you take it to the heart."

It was a song she recorded – and one St. James performed each night on stage – that was burdening her with unexpected pressure, trepidation and ultimately fear.

On her 2000 album "Transform," St. James released "Wait for Me," a song on which she declared, "Darling did you know that I/I dream about you/Waiting for the look in your eyes/When we meet for the first time/Darling did you know that I/I pray about you/Praying that you will hold on/And Keep your loving eyes only for me/Cause I am waiting for/Praying for you, darling/Wait for me, too/Wait for me as I wait for you."

A young woman with fame, success and beauty inside and out, St. James surely thought her waiting wouldn't last long. But when the calendar turned to 2008, and she was still repeating these words to thousands of people (and, of course, none of them were judgmental), St. James began to loathe stepping out on stage.

She "retired" from the music business and relocated from Tennessee – her home since moving to America with her family and seven siblings from Australia – to sunny California, intending to focus on acting and writing.

St. James landed the lead role in the feature film "Sarah's Choice." More significantly, she met Foster the People bassist/film producer Jacob "Cubie" Fink, the man she would marry.

She gave birth to two daughters and was enjoying family life when an unexpected invite came from Grammy Award-winning for KING & COUNTRY – her brothers Luke and Joel Smallbone.

Nine years after last performing live, St. James sang two songs in front of an audience. As she recounted to

Turning Point Media Relations, St. James walked off stage with tears in her eyes and said to Joel, "God just called me back to music."

Slowly but steadily, St. James began to write new songs. Last year, she began compiling music for an EP, and returned to Kingdom Bound to perform ahead of her headlining brothers.

Though she had her own Grammy Award and Gold record sales under her belt for myriad Buffalo-area performances in the 1990s and 2000s, St. James was, at last, able to boast of something even better: her husband, who performed with her on stage.

This spring, St. James debuted a podcast, "Rebecca St. James Friends & Family," on K-LOVE's Accessmore platform. To no one's surprise, the singer, actress, bestselling author, wife and mother is a natural on air, as she doles out advice and shares stories with tried, true and trusted guests. St. James is a smooth talker – that is, her conversation is crisp, witty and informative – and she could easily take this show to television.

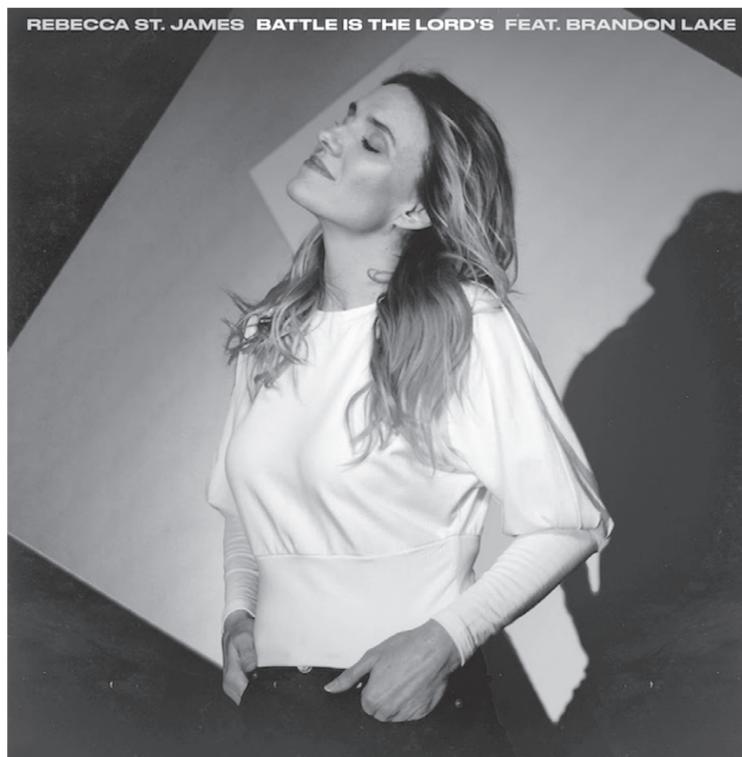
Last Friday, she released "Dawn," a six-song extended-play that has vintage St. James qualities of encouragement, reflection and body-bopping melodies.

It was also announced she is expecting her third child and first boy.

In this edited Q&A, St. James shared details on overcoming her pressure-packed "Wait," and expanding her voice within mainstream media. Read more at [wnypapers.com](http://wnypapers.com).

**Q: You were here for a concert at Artpark in 2007. And every time you've been in Western New York – every time you've worked with Kingdom Bound – it's always been such a blessing to the audience, and it's always been a really positive thing. But something I noticed about you at that time was that you didn't seem to be enjoying performing on stage as much as I had seen in the past. I'm wondering when and how did music start to become threatening for you?**

**Rebecca St. James:** Yeah, yeah – and I have been more vocal in recent years about how challenging that period was, because I think it was around that time that I was just hav-



Rebecca St. James is back with brand-new music on "Dawn." The six-song EP features contributions from for KING & COUNTRY's Luke Smallbone; Bethel Music's Josh Baldwin, Brandon Lake, Kristene DiMarco and Mia Fieldes; Tedd T.; Seth Mosley; and North Point Worship's Seth Condry and Heath Balltzglier. "Dawn" is St. James' debut for Heritage Music, an imprint of Bethel Music. (Image courtesy of Turning Point Media Relations)

ing my most doubtful time, and just struggling in kind of how to handle it.

I think my goal has always been that when God brought my husband, that I would sing and start having kids. That would be just very clean and tidy, and that was my plan. And, as every year went by and I'm still singing "Wait for Me" and talking about this man that I pray will come – but there's no guarantees in life that things will turn out the way that we want. Even when we really believe that they will, or that they're meant to, it's just there's no guarantees. I think my heart was just like – I mean, the Bible says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick," and I think in some ways my heart was sick.

There's also panic attacks happening on stage where, depending on how emotionally exhausted I was that day, would depend on how much I could breathe on stage – or not breathe on stage. So, I think music just became increasingly more threatening till probably around 2008, when I moved to California. And that was largely because I needed this (break).

I got more into acting, and some of the opportunities with that I hadn't

been able to devote time to. But at that point, my breathing challenges from the stress of music were getting so bad that they were moving into my talking ability. So, literally, some kind of situations where I'd be having a conversation that was a little bit more emotionally challenging, I struggled to breathe in that, as well – not just on stage. So, at that point I was like, "Man, I gotta do something about this."

That was a big change moving to California. Going into more acting than music was just a part of that. A part of just needing a big difference in my life and big movement; and I'm so thankful that it happened – and even how, like, kind of humiliating and challenging it was to not be able to breathe. It was really (laughs) – it made me feel like a failure, really. How do you do what you do if you can't breathe as a singer?

I'm thankful now for how painful that was, because it really did lead me to move over there. And, I mean, I may never have met my husband and had this whole dreamy family life that I have now had if not gotten that bad.

So, it was a long time coming, how challenging it got, but I'm now thank-

ful for the pain, because it led to just total renewal.

**Q: With regard to the music, you know, I'm assuming, then, that you sort of said, "That's done and over with, that part of my life – I'm moving on to a different chapter."**

**When did that start to change? When did you start to think, "You know what, maybe I'm going to get back into this? Maybe I can feel a different level of comfort or something different than what I most recently experienced?"**

**Rebecca St. James:** I don't think it was anything that I sensed on the horizon. When I retired seven years ago, it was definitely with this sense of "I may never sing again, and I'm at peace about that, if that's what God's plan is for me. I really am." There's also this element of I will never say never, because I knew that God could bring the kind of renewal that would be needed to do this again. So, I wasn't ruling it out.

But probably right before this really transformative experience happened with God in Alaska. I think around that time I had this just growing sense that he was calling me on a purpose level, and calling our family to something more – that there was something brewing. And it was more mission-oriented, like serving God, serving people. It was like purpose-oriented. It was like my heart was needing to be able to give, you know, on a personal level, and as a family, to something outside of just our little family.

There was that brewing, but I think music, at that point, was still so threatening that I didn't think it would be music (laughs). I was looking at other things. But, then in Alaska, God just did such a radical transforming – like night and day, massive movement in my heart. It was probably the most instantaneously lifechanging experience of my life. Because so much pain fell away that had to do with music, and I saw my journey with music differently after that – and it was literally just a couple songs on stage that I was performing, and had this encounter with the Holy Spirit, that changed everything.

And the beautiful thing was God changed my husband's heart, too. Because neither of us were open to moving to Nashville prior to that point. He had seen a lot of my music pain, and I don't think he wanted that for me. So, God really had to change both of our hearts to open us up to this new season.

To learn more about St. James, or to find "Dawn," follow St. James on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

## Seneca Resorts & Casinos postpones entertainment shows through October

Seneca Resorts & Casinos announced all entertainment shows have been postponed through October. This includes shows scheduled at the Seneca Niagara Event Center, Seneca Niagara Bear's Den Showroom and Seneca Allegany Event Center.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic across the U.S., many entertainment acts have been rescheduling their shows to later dates and into 2021. Original tickets for rescheduled shows will still be honored for rescheduled dates. See the list below and check the website for the most up-to-date information on all entertainment at [senecaniagaracasino.com](http://senecaniagaracasino.com) and [senecaalleganycasino.com](http://senecaalleganycasino.com).

Refunds will be available up to 14 days prior to the rescheduled date from the original point of sale with proof of purchase.

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- ✓ Orleans/pending reschedule/Bear's Den Showroom
- ✓ Matt Fraser/July 17/Seneca Allegany Event Center

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