



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT SARAH MCLACHLAN

THE CANADIAN SINGER OPENS UP ABOUT
HER FRESH START IN LIFE AND LOVE

Shine On is not just the title of Sarah McLachlan's latest album: it's her state of being.

After a turbulent few years – including a divorce from drummer Ashwin Sood, the death of her father and the severing of ties with her management and record company of 23 years – the Canadian singer has emerged stronger than ever.

Just as her album proclaims, she is ready to sparkle. “I love everything it says; it's what we all want – to shine,” the mother of two, 46, tells *Hello! Canada* when we catch up with her at a recording studio in Toronto.

“We want to be seen, we want to be heard,” says Sarah, before turning more personal. “I am in my 40s now and I have the rest of my life in front of me. I get to choose where this is going to go. To be positive and to enter into this next phase in my life with love in my heart and forgiveness. It's such a great way to live.”

Also giving her a little extra glow these days is her romance with a new beau, former NHL star Geoff Courtnall. “He is a lovely man,” she tells us.

As Sarah prepares to head out on a U.S. tour this summer, followed by Canadian shows this fall, she sits down with *Hello! Canada* for an exclusive interview about second chances and her happy life with her two daughters, India, 12, and Taja, 7.

The four years since your last record have been rather tumultuous. When did you know you were ready to make this very personal album? After *Laws of Illusion* I did not want to tell that story anymore. I wanted to have something to say but I did not have it to say yet. I was starting songs and was going back to that comfortable place about breakups and things like that, but I wasn't there anymore; I didn't want to write “that” song. I don't want to sing it anymore. I want something different. It took me becoming whole and meeting

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somebody else, when all of a sudden a world of possibilities opened up again. I was in a great place; I think that's probably why it happened. Great friends, wonderful family, great job, I had a big full life. I feel good; I am happy. I'm whole.

How did you meet Geoff? I wasn't looking for it, and then he walked through my front door, and I was like, “Oh!” I had met him 12 years previously at an event. We talked about his love for Tofino, B.C. I said, “I love Tofino, too! I'm surprised I've never seen you there.” He said he went up there every summer to fish, and I said, “Take me fishing!” We share so many similarities. He's been in the public eye for a long time. I joke and say, “20 years in a locker room, 20 years on a tour bus.” His performance has been scrutinized, both positively and negatively as a hockey player in Vancouver. He had to develop a thick skin around that.

Before you met Geoff, how did you get through the past couple of years? My two dear best friends, who both went through divorces and separations around the same time I did, we were in it together. We all carried each other and lifted each other up.

You have two young daughters. What aspirations do you have for them? For them to be happy, fulfilled and passionate about whatever they

choose to do. They are very musical, very artistic and very dramatic – great actresses!

Will the girls go on tour with you this year? They come on the summer ones; it's like a camping trip. They love it! They love travelling and they love experiencing new places. Every day is a new adventure. It's like, “What are we gonna do today, Mom? Where are we going to go?” We research each place before and there's always a science centre or museums. It's such an education and they are such great travellers because of it. India went all across the world with *Afterglow* [Sarah's 2003 album] from when she was 18 months to three years old. It's in her skin; she is happy behind the scenes. Taja, the little one, wants to be the party animal. The older one is my stylist and my toughest critic.

You've been in the business a long time. Have you ever been star-struck? Absolutely! I was probably 23 when I first met Peter Gabriel, who's my hero. I met him in a kitchen down in New Orleans. I walked in and he was in the fridge getting a beer and I stopped still in my tracks and my jaw fell to the ground! I had that feeling of, “I love this man, I love everything he stands for,” and I did not even know what to say. I was like [*she mumbles as if tongue-tied*]. He asked what I was doing and I told him making a record and it's taking a long time and he said, “Yeah, me too.” Then he said, “Have a great day!” I thought, “Oh, my God, I just spoke to Peter Gabriel!” So when people come up to me, and I can pretty much tell right away if they don't know what to say, I just hug them! We're all the same.

When you're not working, where do you go to decompress? Tofino, surfing, and Hawaii. Beach, sun and surf! Actually, I discovered the most exquisite place on earth – Desolation Sound [in B.C.'s Marine Provincial Park]. It's about halfway between Vancouver Island and Vancouver. It's just a group of inlets and islands. Geoff and I went up there on a boat last year and spent four days. We fished and we ate our catch for dinner. It's just beautiful to get away and be truly by ourselves; there is no one out there. The water is 75 degrees and we just paddled and fished all day. It was glorious.

Sounds like a dream date. Any other favourite ways to spend time together? Probably going for a hike, which would end in a swim in a lake. Then we'd come back and make dinner, watch a movie and do other things! [*Laughs*]

REPORT: TIFFANY THORNTON



Sarah's romance with former NHL player Geoff Courtnall (opposite) was one of many inspirations for her new album, *Shine On*. She kicks off a new tour with her two daughters in tow this month.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KHAREN HILL (2); SPLASH NEWS