



Brianna Gaither Bio

Brianna Gaither believes in the theology of creativity, the understanding that as a Christian, she is a believer in a creative God who nurtures artists. And as the acclaimed singer-songwriter releases *Vanity*, the long-awaited follow-up to her 2011 debut album *Love Is Patient*, she believes that her message of community, faith and creativity will *Resonate*.

Resonate, a campaign Gaither started in September 2016, to empower artists through cooperation and shared belief, is as she describes, “an initiative pursuing relationship with God as a Creator in order to develop excellence in our mirroring creativity, that the beauty of God would revive the heart of man.” Gaither also initiated Resonate as a road map for musicians and creative people to build communities of artistry and faith in her hometown of Oklahoma City.

“I want to invest in my city and I want to bring people together and that’s where Resonate formed,” Gaither said. “Resonate is a community that supports and encourages artists of faith. If you are of the Christian faith, then you believe in a creative God, and the art that you create is the result of that theology of creativity and builds on that belief and faith.”

To test her hypothesis and challenge her notions of how an album should be made, Gaither set her Resonate campaign into motion with *Vanity*. She established a set of parameters, working with 10 producers in 10 months on 10 separate songs. The results dramatically expanded Gaither’s musical vocabulary and built lasting relationships with the 10 Oklahoma City area producers who lent their distinctive sounds to *Vanity*. Each producer -- David Wellman, Phil Rice, Stephen Collins, Jaron Nix, Raul Alfonso, Dustin Ragland, Matt Stansberry, Nathan Holliday, Zach Winters, and Adam Chamberlain – is a member of a community of faith in central Oklahoma, and by becoming part of Gaither’s Resonate campaign to record *Vanity*, they joined another distinct community.

Gaither captured the building blocks and stepping stones of that process in *Resonate*, a documentary that illustrates how the singer-songwriter shepherded her project from start to finish and came away from the process with far more than just a new, startlingly diverse album.

“I really developed a voice throughout this process and grew as a communicator and as

an artist,” she said. “I said yes throughout the creation of *Vanity*, trusting in God that this was the direction it should take. My happiness with the results is proof that this can and will work for artists of faith. I truly believe that when our understanding of who God is and our understanding of our relationship with him are aligned, we achieve our greatest power to realize our artistic goals.”

Long before the Resonate campaign and her career as an insightful and restlessly creative musician, Gaither learned that focus and faith could power her through even the darkest times. The daughter of a gifted musician and composer, Gaither began playing piano at age 5 and started writing her own songs shortly thereafter.

“I was always bringing together melodies with lyrics, but I didn’t begin accompanying myself on the piano, putting it all together, until age 16,” Gaither said. “That was a week after my mother passed away.”

The crushing loss of her mother at a young age sent Gaither into a deep introspection after she found herself unable to focus, not knowing what to do with her hands or her thoughts. She soon determined that music and a continuing relationship with God was her best way forward.

“And so I made a decision,” she said. “I said to myself, ‘I’m going to sit down at this piano, at this keyboard, and I’m going to sit here until I’ve created an original song.’”

Gaither wrote that first song in about two hours, her grief poured into the piano, channeled into art. This was a pivotal moment in her life: Gaither discovered that this was not only her greatest creative expression – it was her way to communicate with God. Every day after school, Gaither went directly to her piano and spent the next four hours practicing and composing songs. When she discovered a notice in her church bulletin about an open mic night, she jumped at the chance to finally share her music with others.

“Initially I was against pursuing this as a career,” Gaither said. “For a long time, I thought this was something I would do for myself and for people in my living room. I wanted to be a missionary from a young age, so I thought I would go into the ministry or do something random to survive. I didn’t have a real plan in that regard.”

But that changed as fellow parishioners at Oklahoma City’s Bridgeway Church encouraged Gaither to pursue a music career, and so the high school senior felt she had received a calling. Enrolling at Oklahoma Christian University in the Oklahoma City suburb of Edmond, Gaither found herself surrounded with other students who shared her faith as well as a desire to forge faith-based careers in music.

“In my sophomore through my senior year, I got really serious about performing regularly,” she said. “I was developing strategic business plans about how to tour, when and where to tour and why. I developed a music business marketing mind at that point. It goes well beyond the art to exploring what it looks like to build a career and sustain myself with my music.”

And in 2010, Gaither decided it was time to record her songs. Working with drummer and fellow Oklahoma Christian student Kelcy White, Gaither recorded *Love Is Patient* with producer Chris Freels at Music Group Studios in Edmond. The resulting set of uplifting chamber pop songs such as “Harvest Moon,” “Home” and the gorgeous title track provided Gaither with a musical calling card, one that soon resulted in a strong demand for live performances.

With several of her fellow students having accepted internships or ministry positions throughout the region, Gaither and White reached out to them and quickly built a strong

touring schedule.

“I really began to appreciate the centrality of our state,” she said. “We just made little flower petal patterns around Oklahoma City, going through Springfield and up through Missouri, then out through Nashville and back, then down through Texas and back. There were weeks when we played seven shows, and the response was just a rapidly accelerating enthusiasm for the album, the shows and everything we were doing. We didn’t have to cold-call for gigs – we were just receiving the calls.”

But almost as soon as it started, Gaither suffered a setback. She was 16 months into performances in support of *Love Is Patient*, when she started experiencing intense pain in her wrists and lower arms, especially in her right arm. Engaged in a rigorous schedule of practice, performance and continued composition, Gaither faced a level of discomfort that truly endangered her future as a musician.

“I got to the point where I couldn’t do anything. It was terrible, and Kelcy was experiencing tendonitis at the same time, so we’re having to switch off driving during the tour, and both of us were suffering through it all,” she said.

Gaither was diagnosed with a repetitive motion injury, one that was so severe that the doctor recommended that she put her music career on hiatus while she underwent therapy and the recovery process. It was the first barrier to success Gaither experienced, and so she put music on the back burner, taking a job creating content for an educational technology firm in nearby Norman and eventually moving over to project management.

Fortunately, there was an answer for what was causing Gaither’s pain: a practice keyboard with a fixed seat had created ergonomic issues in Gaither’s regular playing. Once the posture irregularity was identified, she was soon able to work her way back into writing and playing. Today, Gaither believes that being sidelined happened for a reason, because thanks to her work in project management, she was able to take firm control of her career, leading the way to Resonate.

“Now, I’m doing all of this for myself. It’s like a whole new me – it’s totally different,” she said.

And so is her music. Thanks to the wide-ranging input from her army of producers, Gaither was able to explore new musical textures and styles, including EDM, as part of her repertoire on *Vanity*. Now, with the Resonate campaign and the documentary, Gaither is ready to share her ideas with other creative communities of faith.

“It takes so much energy to create an album that you have to want to make that album more than you want to breathe,” Gaither said. “I believe that through increased mentorship and a cooperation, we can all learn to breathe life and love and faith into our art together.”

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