



Tom Petty

THIS YEAR WAS THE THIRTIETH anniversary of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, and Petty celebrated by keeping busier than ever – he released the melancholy solo album *Highway Companion* and toured the country for the second year in a row, making a crowd-pleasing stop at the Bonnaroo Festival. The whole time, movie director Peter Bogdanovich was following him around for a documentary due later this year. Petty speaks to

2 NOMINATIONS • Best Rock Album Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance

ROLLING STONE from his home in Malibu, where he's taking a few weeks off after wrapping up his tour.

As someone who has a famously mixed relationship with the music industry, how do you feel about the Grammys?

Well, I never really thought about the Grammys one way or another. Honestly, we've been nominated, I think, six-

teen or more times, and we've rarely won.

Except for the Traveling Wilburys, you have only one Grammy.

Well, you know us, always the bridesmaid. It feels nice when you're nominated. I've never attended the Grammys. It's not my kind of evening. I don't mean to slam them – I think that it's probably good for the record industry that they



playing is great, the audience is great – it's fabulous to be in that position. To be showered with love every night is wonderful.

Do you have a sense of what your next album might be?

I think that my next album will be with the Heartbreakers. I haven't even started to write it, so I don't know when it will come along. There's also a live album we've been working on since before the tour started. [Heartbreakers guitarist] Mike Campbell is producing it. They've played me six or seven things that were really stunning that they already finished. I think that's scheduled for a year from now, for next November.

How's the Bogdanovich film coming along?

I saw the first hour yesterday, roughed out – it looks pretty great. I think he's mostly based it around the concert we did in Gainesville [Florida] in September. It sort of goes into flashbacks, with lots of archival footage, and then just keeps coming back to the present, whether it's the rehearsals or on the airplane or at the concert at Gainesville.

Are you continuing your "King of the Hill" role as Lucky?

Yeah, I've done a few of those since I've been home.

I really liked it when Lucky told Bobby to "run down that dream."

[Laughs] It's too much fun.

It's maybe the only show I like on television. They called me down out of the blue to do it, and then [show creator] Mike Judge really liked the character, so they kept calling me back. Now I'm there pretty much all the time. I've

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moved into Hank's house now, married Luanne, got her knocked up. I think Lucky's gonna be around for a while.

What album that came out in 2006 were you most excited by?

I liked Bob [Dylan]'s. There must have been some other stuff, I just can't remember. That's the only trouble I have with music these days. It makes an initial impact, but it doesn't hang around. Maybe that's because there's so much of it now.

Yeah, they said that this year had the most turnover ever in the Number One slot on the album charts.

The whole Number One thing is pretty weird, you know? Because it's not like it used to be, when a record earned its way up to Number One; now it comes in at Number One and goes down.

At least songs still climb the singles chart.

The singles chart? Do they still make those? I haven't seen one of those in decades.

You know, people are buying singles again online.

Right, yeah, the iTunes thing. That's out of my world. I'm into albums.

BRIAN HIATT

have a big to-do. And you always love it when you win.

You said this would be your last big tour. Are you still feeling that way?

Yeah, I don't know if I want to take on huge national tours. But I don't want to say I won't, because maybe I will! But it's doubtful. The traveling wears on me more than usual. We did, like, eighty-five plane flights in three months – that's a lot of traveling. I've done it all my life, it seems. But I still love to play. The