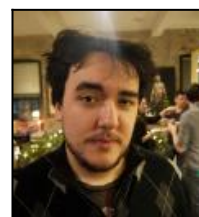


NBG Exclusive: Brook Williams Interview; 19 Albums and Counting



Brook Williams has jammed the world over as shown here in a show in Birmingham, England



by John
Michael
Bell

The New Bedford Folk Festival will feature a number of artists whose reputations precede them. Few, however, can match the pedigree of festival regular Brooks Williams. The Statesboro, Georgia native has a long list of critical accolades to his name (including raves from Rolling Stone and Guitar Player Magazine) in a career that has seen him release 19 albums.

Williams's 20th album, titled "New Everything", is coming out later this year.

Williams is presently touring the United Kingdom, but will be making an appearance at the New Bedford Folk Festival on July 6 and 7. He was gracious enough to conduct an interview via email while still in the UK.

Where are you from?

I was born in Statesboro, Georgia and raised in the south.

Where did you get your start playing professionally?

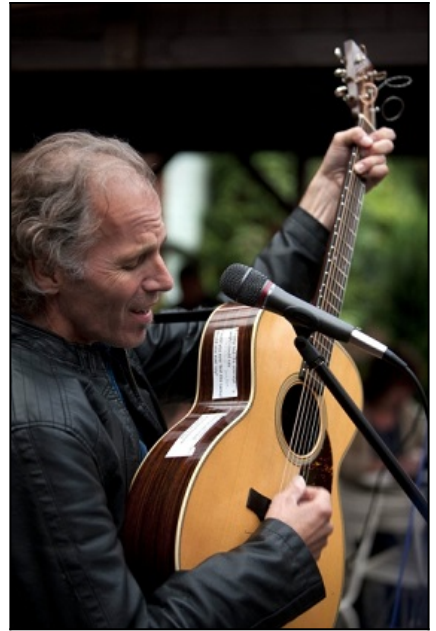
I moved to Boston when I was 18 years old to go to school and it was in Boston that I got my start professionally, playing the little clubs and coffeehouses in the city and the suburbs.

Were there any guitarists at the time who particularly influenced you?

At the time I was particularly inspired by the likes of David Bromberg, Taj Mahal, Bonnie Raitt and Mark Knopfler.

You have played in venues around the world. Are there any particular places that surprised you, that had more fans of folk and blues guitar than you expected?

I've played some amazing venues throughout the world. Many of them are dotted around the USA and Canada, little hotbeds of folk and blues guitar fans in the middle of what appears to be nowhere – but is actually quite somewhere! From a purely surprising point of view, I was surprised by how switched on audiences in the UK are to Americana and blues music. They know American music better than many Americans! Equally, I was stunned by the responses I got to my music in Istanbul Turkey and Nairobi Kenya. Who knew they'd be so switched on to American roots music?



Brook Williams will be playing at this year's N.B. Folk Festival

You're spending a lot of time in the UK this year. How has that experience been? Are there any particularly memorable towns or venues that you've played in the UK?

One of my favourite venues in the UK is The Green Note in London. It's a small venue but the vibe is huge. My other favourite is The Stables, halfway between Oxford and Cambridge. It was founded many years ago by jazz singer Cleo Laine and has a great vibe. My favorite festival over here is called The Shrewsbury Festival. It happens the end of August and wherever I am in the world, I always try and get back to it, even if just for a day. It's my UK New Bedford Folk Festival, if you know what I mean!

You have played the New Bedford Folk Festival (previously known as New Bedford Summerfest) before, correct? What brings you back to New Bedford this year? What has your past experience in the city been like?

I actually played the very first New Bedford Summerfest and have played the festival many times since, though not for a few years as I've been overseas so much. It's actually my favourite US festival. I see all my friends, hear great music, enjoy the lovely surroundings of a beautiful city. And I get to do the thing that I do, which is play my music to an appreciative audience. What's not to love about all that! I'm back in the US quite a bit this year as I have a new CD, called NEW EVERYTHING, coming out in September. I'm doing a short New England tour the beginning of July – which includes the New Bedford Folk Festival – to preview some of the songs. Then we'll be back in October and November to properly launch the album...and we'll be back again in the winter and spring of 2014 as well.

Are there any challenges you frequently come across on long stretches of touring?

The biggest challenge I encounter when on the road for long stretches of time is the toll that much touring and traveling takes on the voice. It takes a lot of work to keep the voice strong and healthy when touring.

What are you most looking forward to sharing on your upcoming album? Will the material reflect on your experiences since your last album?

I love the songs on my new album, NEW EVERYTHING. The lyrics and the melodies have come together in a way that I'm very proud of. The new album also features some of the musician/friends I have met since moving to the UK. Artists like Martin Simpson, Boo Hewerdine, Andy Seward and Neil McSweeney are at the top of the game here in the live music scene here in the UK and it was not only fun but also an honour to have them on my recording.

You can listen to music, see more photos and read more about

Brook Williams on his website.