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## Settling down in Branson?

### Melissa Etheridge gets 'Lucky' in marriage and muses on a kitschy rock 'n' roll mecca

By Ari Bendersky

After nearly two decades in rock and selling more than 25 million albums, she's earned the right to be referred to simply as Melissa. Like Cher or Madonna, Melissa Etheridge has achieved cult status, especially among her very strong lesbian following.

Following a dark period after the collapse of her long relationship with partner Julie Cypher, with whom she had two children (fathered by David Crosby), Etheridge met actress Tammy Lynn Michaels ("The L Word"). Now, Melissa says she's finally found true love. What's resulted is "Lucky," arguably her most inspired release since "Yes I Am," her 1993, six-million-selling album proclaiming her sexual orientation.



We caught up with Etheridge, who hits the House of Blues for a four-night stand Thursday, from her hotel room in Detroit.

**So how's married life (the couple has already had a star-studded commitment ceremony)?**

Awesome ... most amazing ? better than I ever thought it would be. Not to quote a song of mine, but "when you find the one" ? you find the right thing, the right partner, the right soul to navigate through life's waters, it makes the trip a lot more wonderful.

**So, tell me, does she want you, infatuate**

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**and haunt you? Does she know just how to shock you, electrify and rock you?**

(Laughs and starts to sing along with the recitation of her lyrics.) You know what? She does. It's cool.

**Do you think you'll fly up to San Francisco and make it official?**

We talked about it and came to the conclusion that we want to get a license in a place where it's most likely to be upheld. The San Francisco licenses are going to go through major court stuff. We decided to wait on Massachusetts. We will do that as soon as we feel it's the best recognized license.

**So, will you do a Rosie on the steps and have everyone take your picture?**

Probably. I think that's what's changing the world--finally there's a picture. It's not just famous people. Every day it's another mayor gone wild somewhere. [It's saying] look, they're there and they're actually here in your town.

**You've got a great career, a hot young wife (Michaels, whose family is from Chicago, is 29; Etheridge is 42) two kids--what's next, a Celine Dion-like residency in Vegas?**

(Laughs) I was playing about four nights at the Anaheim [Calif.] House of Blues, and in the middle of it I said [to myself], "Ya know, I'm getting used to this and I could Celine Dion it and set up shop somewhere." If it wasn't considered schmaltzy ? that's my dream to not have to travel. I actually had a conversation with Bruce Springsteen about how we need our own Branson [Mo.], our rock 'n' roll place where everyone comes to us.

**Why are you doing multiple shows at smaller venues. You're not strapped for the cash, are you?**

No, I'm doing fine. I know that every time we're presenting a new project we always think of something that would be interesting that we haven't done in awhile. This album is so much more rock 'n' roll and passionate that it called for a smoky bar approach.

**How do you think your fans would react if you came out wearing a suit and ripped it off to reveal a nude bodysuit, like Britney did at the MTV VMAs?**

I think they would laugh really hard, and go "Dude, what are you up to?" This ... body's not doing that nude body stocking thing. I'm fine in my jeans and my leather, thank you very much.

**I read that you feel like you're doing drag if you put on a dress--who would want to dress up as?**

Oh my God--that's funny. I've never thought about that. Somebody crazy--like Elizabeth Taylor. How about Barbra Streisand?

**Melissa Etheridge**

**Where:** [House of Blues](#)

**When:** 8 p.m. Thu.-Sun.

**Tickets:** SOLD OUT

*Ari Bendersky is a metromix special contributor.*

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