

Heather Rankin was born in the picturesque village of Mabou, Cape Breton, the eleventh of Buddy and Kaye Rankin's twelve children. Mabou is rich in Gaelic culture and tradition; a place where Celtic music and dance is tightly interwoven in the lives of its community. The Rankin family lived in a house next to the Community Hall, so Heather and her siblings could sit on the fence and listen to the music emanating from the Pig and Whistles inside. A vivacious child with a flair for making people laugh, Heather was involved in figure skating, playing the piano, performing with the local drama group, singing in choir at both church and school, and she began singing and step dancing with her siblings at community concerts when she was five years old. Heather learned Gaelic songs when she joined the Gaelic Singing Group, Caileagan Mhabu when she was nine, and later began integrating these songs into the set list when she performed with her older siblings for the Christmas and New Year dances.

When Heather was seventeen she participated in a theatre workshop at the University College of Cape Breton conducted by the Highland Youth Theatre from Scotland. The following year, she joined the Highland Youth Theatre for a two week session of workshops and performances in Scotland. While in University, Heather performed as an actor and a singer in *The Cape Breton Summertime Revue*, which toured to parts of Nova Scotia. She graduated with a BFA in Theatre from Acadia University in 1989.

Later that year, Heather came together with her siblings, John Morris, Raylene, Jimmy and Cookie to form The Rankin Family, and to record their debut record of the same name. For the next decade the group released five full albums, a five song EP and two compilations of their most popular songs. They toured extensively, playing to sold-out houses and at festivals across the country and around the world, they won a multitude of awards, including six Juno Awards, three Canadian Country Music Awards and fifteen East Coast Music Awards, and had several of their records certified Platinum by CRIA. They were guests on Rita MacNeil's variety show, *Rita and Friends*, and on Anne Murray's Television Special *Anne Murray in Nova Scotia* and were featured on Garrison Keillor's radio program *Prairie Home Companion*. In 1995 they performed at the Bottom Line in New York for a televised documentary called *The Rankin Family Backstage Pass* and in 1996 Heather and her siblings received Honorary Doctorates in Music from Acadia University. The Rankin's fifth studio album, *Uprooted*, was the first to include one of Heather's original songs, "Cold Winds." In September, 1999 the band decided to go their separate ways and to pursue disparate projects.

Heather made her Neptune Theatre debut in 2001 playing Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. She has since returned there to play Bitsy in Daniel MacIvor's play *Bingo*, for which she was nominated for a Robert Merritt Award, and to star in Michael Melski's play *Hockey Mom, Hockey Dad*. She has also performed at Chester Playhouse, with Mulgrave Road, at The Atlantic Fringe Festival and at The Factory Theatre in Toronto with Necessary Angel Theatre Company. Her film and television appearances include *The Hanging Garden*, *Marion Bridge*, *Wild Dogs*, *Scotland, PA.*, *Nonsense Revolution*, *Faith*, *Fraud & Minimum Wage* and *Lexx*.

Heather and her sisters, Raylene and Cookie, released a Christmas record in 1997, which included one of Heather's original songs, "The Christmas Star." The girls took their Christmas music on tour across the country almost every holiday season until 2010, sometimes playing with Canadian Symphonies. They made two Television Specials: *A Rankin Christmas Cabaret* and *Home For Christmas*. In 1999 Heather went to Scotland and Ireland to cohost a documentary about Celtic Music, called *Celtic Tides*. The next year Heather, Raylene and Cookie were invited to Martha's Vineyard to record background vocals for Carly Simon's record *The Bedroom Tapes*.

Heather accompanied Simon during her Promotional Tour, which included performances on *The View*, *Good Morning America* and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, as well as a concert in Bryant Park, during which Heather sang backup vocals on Simon's hit song "You're So Vain." In 2005 Heather, Raylene, Cookie and their sister Genevieve became the Proprietors of The Red Shoe Pub in Mabou. In 2011 The Shoe was awarded Restaurant of the Year- Essence of Nova Scotia at the Taste of Nova Scotia Prestige Awards. In 2014 Heather and her sisters were awarded the Arts and Culture Achievement Award by Women in Business in Cape Breton.

In 2007 Heather, Raylene, Jimmy and Cookie reunited and released their sixth studio album with EMI, *Reunion*, which featured Heather's original song "Nothing to Believe In." Their seventh, *These Are The Moments*, was released in 2009, and included Heather's song "I Would." They toured between 2007 and 2012 and in 2013 The Rankin Family received a special 25th Anniversary Music Award at the East Coast Music Awards in Halifax.

Heather's voice has been featured as a guest artist on a multitude of albums, including Will Ackerman's Grammy Award winning *Hearing Voices*. She, Jimmy and Cookie sing on the track "Go Tell It On The Mountain" on Johnny Reid's Platinum Edition of his album *A Christmas Gift to You* and they appear with Natalie MacMaster in the music video, which was shot in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Heather, Cookie and Jimmy rang in 2014 performing in Summerside at the New Year's Eve Finale with Burton Cummings and Doc Walker.

In 2012 Heather started work on her first solo record. She formed a writing partnership with David Tyson, a Juno Award winning Canadian songwriter and music producer, and together they wrote seven songs for her album, including its title track "A Fine Line." Three of the other songs are originals written by Tyson, and one is a cover of a Tears for Fears song that features Haligonian rap artist Quake Matthews. The record was released April 1st, 2016 on Cadence Music. As a solo artist Heather has performed with Bruce Guthro, Lennie Gallant, Dave Gunning, Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy. Coming up, in April Heather is set to cohost the East Coast Music Awards Gala in Sydney, Nova Scotia with Ashley MacIsaac.

Heather is proud to make her home in Nova Scotia.