

Christa Couture's Long Time Leaving is celebration of "ordinary" heartache

"Criminally under-rated" – The Georgia Straight

For most musicians, the break-up album is the quintessential songwriter cliché – bringing with it the burden to eek out some kind of originality from an oversubscribed muse.

But for award-winning indie artist Christa Couture -- whose first three albums reflected on her teenage battle with cancer, the loss of her left leg to the disease, and the deaths of both of her young children under separate circumstances -- the opportunity to write songs about such ordinary heartache seemed like a welcome reprieve.

On the Steve Dawson-produced *Long Time Leaving*, Christa offers a truly unique take on the topic thanks in part to a long and complex relationship with grief that's given her rare insight into its nuances.

It's a mostly upbeat album filled with sweet soaring hooks, whimsical melodies, clever word-play and Christa's trademark sweet, quirky vocals.

It is at times an album to sing along to, even an album to do housework too (!!) – something Christa was striving for – and an album about continuing to move forward in the aftermath of tragedy.

Case in point is "When it Gets Dark Again," a compassionate ditty with an "Ooo ooo ooo" chorus, about the times when binge-drinking is a perfectly understandable and forgivable response to pain.

"Zookeeper" is a darkly amusing, musical theatre-influenced escapade that compares the process of couple's counseling to that of a zookeeper tending to wild animals.

"In the Papers" is a clever, fictionalized account of that feeling when you know everyone's talking about you.

And the album's opener, "The Slaughter," is a wistful melody with lush vocal reverb in which Christa describes post break-up dalliances with both women and men – and ponders queer identity, lust and exploration.

The collection seems effortlessly cohesive as Christa's expansive vocals and singular writing style provide the foundation for an array of arrangements – ranging from the sprightly, minimalist "Aux Oiseaux" to the twangy "Alone in This." The latter is Christa's "Nashville breakup song," in honor of the city where the album was recorded.

Juno-winner Dawson not only produced the album but also contributes as a musician, adding pedal steel Weissenborn, ukulele and electric guitar. The top-notch band is rounded out by Blackie and the Rodeo Kings' rhythm section: John Dymond (k.d. lang, Bruce Cockburn) on bass and Gary Craig (Jann Arden, Anne Murray) on drums. Famed Nashville-based fiddler Fats Kaplin also makes an appearance on the coquettish "Lovely Like You."

About Christa Couture

Winner of the 2008 Canadian Aboriginal Music Award for Best Folk Acoustic Album, Christa Couture has built a reputation for transforming tragedy into musical triumph, capturing tiny snapshots of grief and elevating each to a unique work of art – sometimes desolate but more often uplifting in its encapsulation of a single treasured memory or moment of hope.

Her most recent album, 2012's *The Living Record*, made Best-of-the-Year lists at CBC Music, Radio Regent and the Georgia Straight and prompted Straight critic Alex Varty to describe Christa as "criminally under-rated." Its predecessor, *The Wedding Singer and the Undertaker* made the Top 10 at CBC Radio 3 and went to #1 on the National Aboriginal Music Countdown. PopMatters likened Christa's voice to that of Amy Rigby and praised her skill in writing an album about loss that "does not feel like the aural equivalent of ambulance chasing."

Perhaps the greatest recognition of Christa's talent and perseverance, however, came in 2014 when fans and friends rallied to raise more than \$25,000 to purchase her a high-tech microprocessor knee for her prosthetic leg – making it easier for her to get around on the road.

Christa also used some of the money to put a sweet floral print on her prosthesis!

Born and raised in Edmonton, Christa is the offspring of a folk-singing mother and a father who performed First Nations ceremonial music.

As a child, she sang in choirs and performed in musical theatre. After high school, she studied at Vancouver Film School and went on to spend ten years working in film and television before returning to music with the release of 2005's *Fell out of Oz*. She has toured Canada, the U.S., the U.K. Germany and Holland and earned enthusiastic reviews on three continents.

RootsMusic.ca wrote of her: "Some reviewers hear Jane Siberry, Joni Mitchell; Tori Amos might also come to mind at points. But that's merely a way of saying Couture's work has the combination of accessibility and emotional depth such thoughtful writers have in common."

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