

SOUNDS

Notable Canadian artists strike a chord with their latest projects

BITES



REDISCOVERING BRUCE COCKBURN

A new album takes a “deep dive” into the legendary folk artist’s archives

BEING A BRUCE COCKBURN fan is an uncommonly rewarding designation. And not just because the singer-songwriter, guitarist and Officer of the Order of Canada has been steadily producing reliably excellent albums since the '70s. Cockburn is also a musician magnet, meaning his stuff is routinely covered by a wide cross-section of others, from Jimmy Buffett to jazz guitarist Michael Occhipinti – a personal favourite of Cockburn’s – imbuing his catalogue with variety and vitality.

Now Cockburn, 77, has issued *Rarities*, a deep dive into the archives featuring 16 “rarely heard and newly mastered recordings,” including, among other gems, “Bird Without Wings,” a Cockburn demo dating to 1966;

“Twilight on the Champlain Sea,” featuring folk star Ani DiFranco and previously released only in Japan; plus Cockburn covers of artists like Gordon Lightfoot and Pete Seeger heretofore only available on compilation albums.

For the faithful, *Rarities* is both a treasure trove and further proof of our man’s ability to capture lightning in a bottle with dazzling regularity. The set also tees up a new, as-yet-untitled album, recently cut in Nashville with long-time Cockburn collaborator Colin Linden, due for release in May and followed by extensive touring, COVID permitting.

“It means quite a bit to me to have these songs get out,” Cockburn says in an interview with *Zoomer*, from San Francisco, where he lives with wife M.J. Hannett and their 11-year-old daughter, Iona. “Some of them are live versions of things that have been out already. But with the really obscure and old songs, it’ll be interesting to

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY BRUCE COCKBURN



Crooning with **MICAH BARNES**



me to see how people respond.”

Nerds will note that tracks on *Rarities* surfaced on 2014’s *Rumours of Glory* limited-edition box set, released in conjunction with Cockburn’s highly candid 2014 memoir of the same name. But as Cockburn notes, the box set “was quite expensive and we only made a few hundred copies. The *Rarities* package included in that set seemed like a nice thing to put out there for more general consumption. I mean, I write this stuff so people will hear it.”

For Cockburn’s many avid, marquee song interpreters, meanwhile, *Rarities* offers a new batch of options for exalting their own shows and recordings. It’s happened before, repeatedly. Indeed, you know you’re an incomparable songwriter when Deadheads – Grateful Dead devotees and possibly the most scrupulously

detailed fans in the rock canon – mistake your song for a Jerry Garcia original.

“I did a livestream performance from the headquarters of *Relix*,” Cockburn chuckles, referencing the legendary music magazine founded by Deadheads in 1974. “The office was full of young Grateful Dead fans. I sang ‘Waiting for a Miracle.’ They were shocked to learn that song was mine and not Jerry Garcia’s.” (The late Dead leader covered the song with his Jerry Garcia Band side project.)

“On stage, I have jokingly thanked Barenaked Ladies for letting me do ‘Lovers in a Dangerous Time,’” he continues, when asked if some listeners mistake their hit version of his song – cut in 1991 and still in rotation today – as theirs. “I don’t think people are too confused about that one,” Cockburn says of the track, crowned the 15th greatest Canadian song of all time by CBC Radio One. “It was pretty high-profile for me, too.” —*Kim Hughes*

At 62, the musician lands a new record deal and a coveted TV gig

MUSICAL MULTITASKER MICAH Barnes has long juggled his own career with helping others, but this year he’s doing both in a big way. The one-time member of The Nylons, whose 2020 solo album, *Vegas Breeze*, debuted at No. ▶

Zoom In Music

1 on the Canadian iTunes Jazz Chart, has recently signed with Universal-distributed Alma Records and landed a plum gig as music director for the 2023 season of the TV show *Canada's Got Talent*.

"I have fallen in love with the job," the giant personality enthuses in an interview with *Zoomer*. "I'm now in the business of making Canada fall in love with different singers."

The 62-year-old Vienna-born, Toronto-raised singer-pianist will likely draw on his experience as vocal coach for CBC's 2008 talent show, *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?* "That was the deepest learning curve of my coaching career, because I worked under Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical director [Simon Lee] and they don't screw around," Barnes laughs.

Besides cutting three full-length albums and a couple of EPs, and performing regularly onstage, Barnes has a thriving coaching business called Singers Playground, which readies young artists for the studio, the stage or an audition. "That's kind of my jam," says Barnes, counting among his alumni JP Saxe, whose "If the World Was Ending" was nominated for Song of the Year at the 2021 Grammys.

In September, he signed to Alma, a label owned by noted producer, arranger and musician Peter Cardinali - whose credits include Dusty Springfield, Anne Murray, Rush and *The Care Bears*. Barnes is fired up about this new chapter late in his career. "We're very early in the planning stages, but the label and I are excited to roll up our sleeves and include songs that my Nylon fans will find familiar. We're definitely looking at jazz arrangements of '60s pop classics, although I am doing some songwriting for the album as well.

"I definitely write from the perspective of being a grown-up and all the different challenges that we face as we become mature humans," he says. "So I don't try to write songs about partying in the club," he adds, with a laugh. —Karen Bliss

RAINE MAIDA



CHANTAL KREVIAZUK

IT AIN'T EASY

On working, playing, and touring together as one of Canada's leading musical couples

SINGER-PIANIST CHANTAL Kreviazuk and alt-rocker husband, Raine Maida of Our Lady Peace, are back at it this December, playing shows on their "Forgive Me Tour" that includes songs from their duo album, *I'm Going to Break Your Heart*.

"We're really focused on putting out new material. We're in the studio now. We're writing a book together and really just focused on the continuation of the journey," says Kreviazuk, a two-time Juno award winner, in an interview with *Zoomer*. "Obviously, we're always evolving as individuals and as a couple. That's how the material is reflecting."

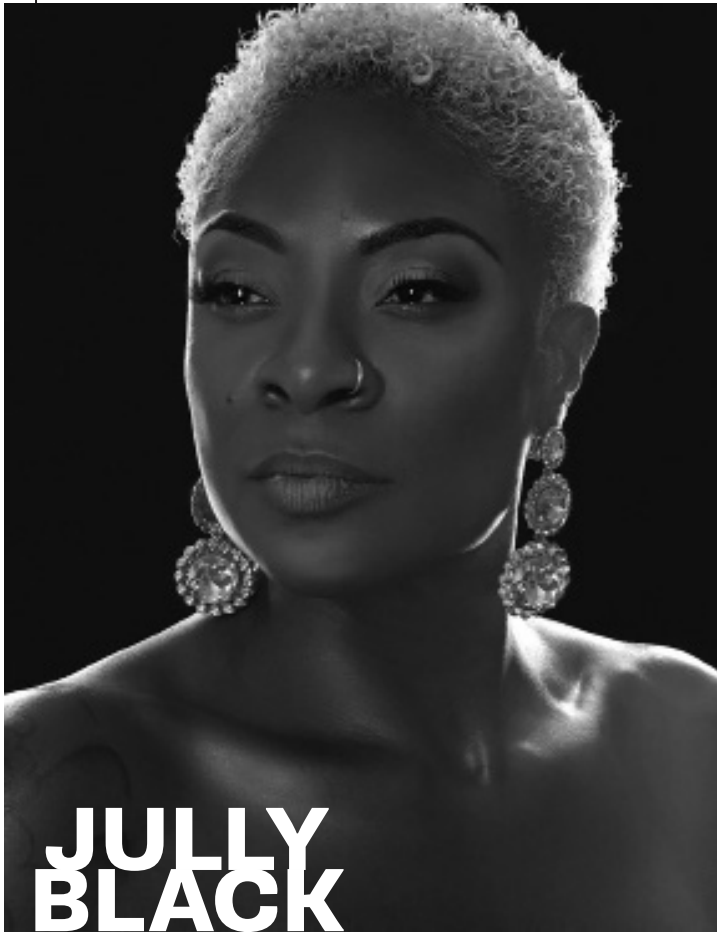
While Kreviazuk, 48, and Maida, 52, who have been married for 23 years and have three sons, have co-written songs for her albums and for other acts, their first true collaboration came in 2014 in a creative partnership they called Moon Vs Sun. Part of this included the 2019 release of an intimate and revealing documentary, *I'm Going to Break Your Heart*, chronicling the challenging process of making their first album, while attending couples therapy to resolve communication issues.

"It was definitely us figuring out what our sound is," Kreviazuk says. "When we go in [the studio] together and collaborate together, it's kind of dreamy because we know what we are together, if that makes sense. So everything from that place, that leaping pad, is quite natural. I don't want to say it's easy, because it's never easy to collaborate with your spouse," she laughs.

"[Doing shows] with my husband is incredibly meaningful and rewarding," Kreviazuk says. "For me, there's nothing like it that I've been a part of and I think Raine feels the same way. Would I like to do that show every night of my life if I could? I would love to, but the reality is I'm not there yet. The nice thing about the show with Raine is that we play our songs that we have in our separate journeys and so that ties it together."

Their "Forgive Me Tour" 2022 includes dates at Ottawa's National Arts Centre (Dec. 1-2), Toronto's Paradise Theatre (Dec. 10), St. Davids, Ont.'s Ravine Vineyard (Dec. 14) and The Studio at Hamilton Place (Dec. 16). —KB

Voice of Many Colours



JULLY
BLACK

The multi-hyphenate talent's new music focuses on emotional strength

R&B POWERHOUSE and Canada Walk of Fame inductee Jully Black is a ubiquitous presence in this country, on radio, TV, stage and online, so it's surprising to learn *Three Rocks and a Slingshot* is her first studio album in 13 years.

"Yeah, it's hard to believe that it's been this long as far as a studio album, but the beauty about the type of artist that I've always been is about entertainment and connecting with people using my gift," Black tells *Zoomer*. "I realize that my voice has many sides and that's what's been inspiring. It's been my motivator to say, 'Hey, Jully, people pay attention when you open your mouth, whether it's in melody or whether it's speaking. So let's really use that to continue to be rich.'"

Funny and engaging, Black is often called upon to host award shows and emcee events. Athletic and determined, she competed in this summer's gruelling *Amazing Race Canada*. Outspoken and tell-it-like-it-is, she will talk candidly and publicly about injustice and anti-Black racism. A solid actress, she appeared in *Da Kink in My Hair*, *Coroner*, *Diggstown* and in other on-screen roles,

before tackling the lead in the civil rights era stage musical *Caroline, Or Change*.

Those who follow Canada's Queen of R&B Soul on social media know about her daily routine, The Power of Step, a virtual aerobics and personal transformation coaching business she started during the pandemic, now with added in-person monthly pop-up classes. It's a spinoff of a business she launched four years ago, 100 Strong and Sexy, her self-described "health, wellness and lifestyle organization." At its core, it's a get-up-off-your-ass community and exercise and nutrition challenge and overhaul for women, especially of colour.

At 45, this most hyphenated creative force keeps taking on new roles and goals. That said, the woman who looks like she always has it together almost fell apart five years ago when her mother - a single parent who raised nine children - died. Like many of us who have lost a parent, her life was suddenly separated by before mom died/after mom died.

"That 100 per cent happened with me," Black says. "When mom ended up passing, my emotional priorities instantly changed. I often say mom's last breath became my first full breath. When you witness somebody take their last - and the most important person to you - you start realizing that certain conversations do not merit my breath and there's all other decisions that need to be made.

"My mom used to say the wealthiest place on Earth is the cemetery, because there's people who died with books and with recipes and with degrees, with conversations they didn't have - dreams are in the cemetery. And so I started writing this album the year before she got sick.

"Whether one person streams it or buys it or it totally goes viral, this album, *Three Rocks and a Slingshot*, is to honour my mom's life and her courage."

Released independently, *Three Rocks and a Slingshot* is the follow-up to 2009's *The Black Book* and includes her 2019 hit "Follow Your Love," plus many deep-down revelations, like the pure conviction expressed in "Half Empty," the resilience of "No Relation" and the I-can-take-it "Mi No Fraid."

"It's an ode to a Bible tale, David and Goliath," the singer-songwriter says of the new album's title. "A little boy has to go up against the giant. And for me, the giants I have been going up against systemically are racism, the music business, ageism, so many different things," Black says. "And then the internal giants: my limiting beliefs, the inner saboteur.

"I always knew and know I have the talent. I've never questioned my talent," she clarifies. "What's been a giant is resources now for independent artists: How do I do this on my own when I've been a child star? I got my first record deal with Sony when I was 14. I only knew the record business."

Diversification has been key, but all offshoots of her big personality. She's never been a David; always a Goliath. —KB