

SOUND BITES

Notable Canadian artists strike a chord with their latest projects

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 me to see how people respond.”

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY BRUCE COCKBURN

PHOTOGRAPHY, LILIANA REYES



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.”

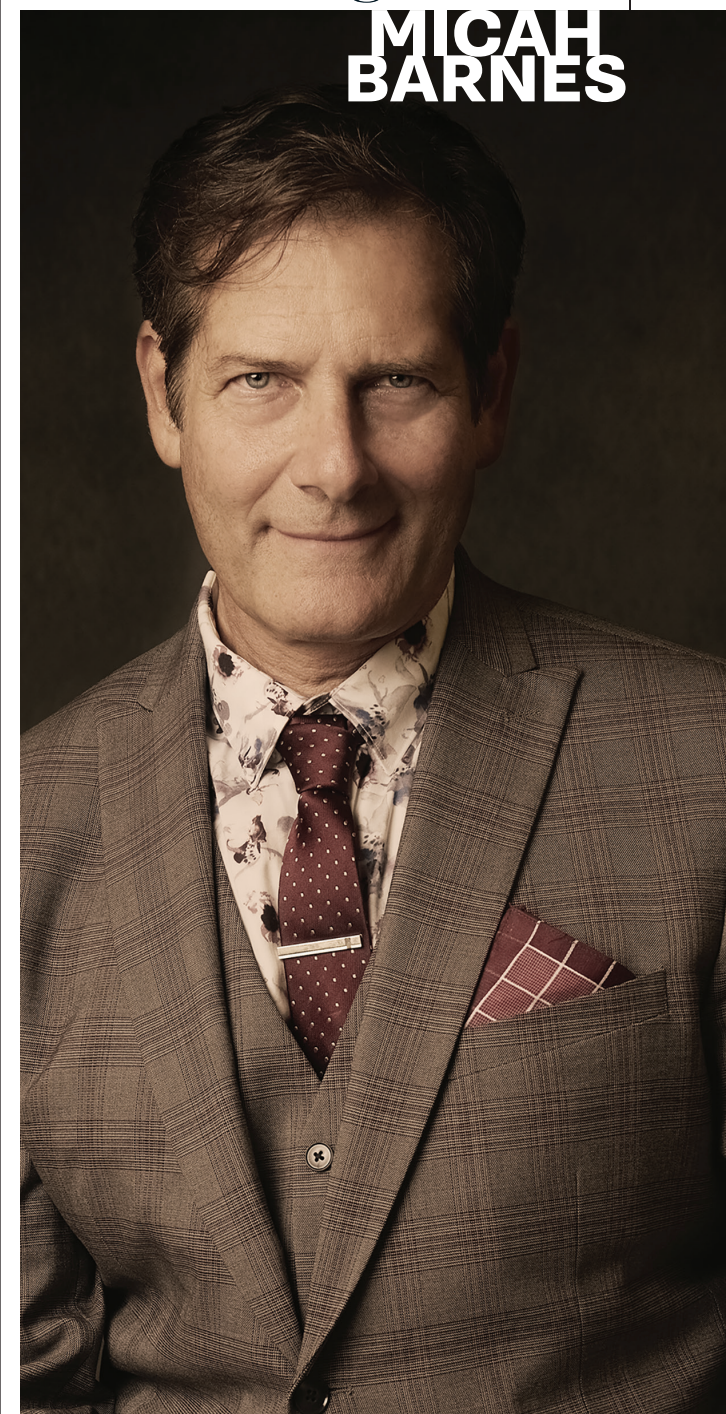
For Cockburn's many avid, marquee song interpreters, meanwhile, *Rarities* offers a new batch of options for exalting their own shows and recordings. It's happened before, repeatedly. Indeed, you know you're an incomparable songwriter when Deadheads – Grateful Dead devotees and possibly the most scrupulously

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*

Crooning with MICAH BARNES



The veteran musician lands a new record deal and a coveted TV gig

MUSICAL MULTI-TASKER 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. 1