

Mark Berube and the Patriotic Few

What The Boat Gave The River

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Press Quotes

Vibrant and outspoken...The detail Berube incorporates into his lyrics makes it hard not to see what he sees, and if *What The River Gave The Boat* can be so alluring, I can't imagine that his next album, *What The Boat Gave The River*, would be any less spectacular." **Exclaim!**

"His good luck streak continues with elegant string arrangements, sympathetic production and a soaring voice that reminds us what Rufus Wainwright and Hawksley Workman would sound like if they weren't such drama queens. **Michael Barclay, Eye Weekly, Discovery of the Week**

"One of the best of the year...folk music without going on about it. Rare and raw and perfect." **Edmonton Sun**

"There is a deeper quality to people with a range of experiences, a bedrock vein of self-awareness, compassion, strength and insight." **FFWD**

"It's not just the choice of his words, which he does stunningly, but the salt and grit of experience and empathy in his voice that makes *What The River Gave The Boat* enough to sprain whatever existential muscle it is that ties the heart to the soul." **Any Given Tuesday**

"Does anyone else feel that lump in their throat miraculously leaving as the final strains of strings and pounding drums take us to the end of the album, and Mark Berube shuts off the tape, and we are left alone again? **SCORE: 8.9/10, Two-way Monologues**

What The Boat Gave The River is a companion disk to the 2007 release *What The River Gave The Boat*. Each song on this stunning new album has its sister on the previous one, a musical echo in mood, tone or story. The result is an ambitious, triumphant record of brilliantly rendered stories, soaring three-part harmonies, surprising twists in pace and style and pure musicianship. Mark Berube's multi-instrumental gifts, lyrical precision and luscious voice have been cutting a memorable line through the fog of pop/folk predictability for a long time now, in North America and across Europe. But backed by his new band *The Patriotic Few*, they are now "ducking in the shadows of a coastguard's hungry spotlight," and cutting a new wake.

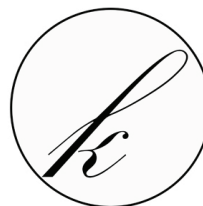
What is different between the two albums may be even just as important. Mark has relocated to Montreal from Vancouver to make this album. It's a return to his family roots. Mark worked with a new producer Dave A. Sturton (Jean Leclerc, Dave Martel, Anik Jean) and a new team of players. The recording took place in DNA Studios, in the same neighborhood (Le Plateau Montreal) as where Mark's father grew up.

On the first track, "Looking For Another", what begins with a rhythmic trickle of water and a scatter of voices from offshore soon crescendos into something resembling the anthem of our times, with Mark finally pleading, "Don't think, just row." From here, he and his new crew throw everything they've got at the oars - strings, accordian, glockenspiel, plucked piano, four part harmonies interweaving - to create a dynamic collection of rhythms, melodies and hooks. Mark casts his gaze into many corners of our shimmering world, from the Bible-thumpers to the proselytizers of Western greed, from the homelessness and drugs in our cities to the fun and reckless hedonism that can only be found downtown, from the wars that never end to the meek and hopeful beauty of flowers sprouting amongst the stones. In the old school gospel number "Caulfield Line" the main character in the song offers himself up to be tied down to the tracks, body and soul, to stop the train of progress - the same train that "took the Romans away". His voice urges itself across "the clang of steel and love and wood and man" as a mournful weissenborn guitar and strings sound the coming locomotive. Where traditional trains in the genre brought freedom or salvation, Mark offers his own contemporary take. The headlines are still here, heavy tales in which the Devil, like Pinocchio, is often the most honest guy you'll meet. But now these stories are infused with something new, something hopeful and uplifting, perhaps the long-lost halo Mark's been trying to dig up in these two bold albums.

This album is a powerful personal statement rendered in a way that is both raw and polished at the same time. If the mission was to make an album that would do justice to Mark's dynamic and powerful live show, *What the Boat Gave the River* succeeds brilliantly. Averaging about 100 shows a year across Canada, the US, and Europe for the past 4 years, Mark has honed and honed. As said during the grand finale of "Shiny Plastic Bags/Barber Shop Pt 2", the answer to the story of what the river gave the boat is simple: some things float and some things don't.

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