

QUIET MEDITATIONS: Patrick Carr set to play solo show at Ted's

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By Shannon Rae Gentry

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Patrick Carr will debut songs from upcoming 2020 album at Ted's on December 13. Photo by Kat Lancaster

“When the Road Darkens” is an apt title for singer-songwriter Patrick Carr’s 2017 EP. While not a sad collection, per se, there’s a soberness to his folksy storytelling and instrumentals.

An English major and self-described “book nerd,” Carr’s songs are filled with literary references. One will recognize the nod to the green light from “The Great Gatsby” in “Don’t Let It Break Your Heart.”

“I adapted the title of the EP from a line found in ‘The Lord of the Rings,’” Carr explains, “which originally read, ‘[f]aithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens.’ So far, only one person has been able to guess where the title comes from.”

Though he initially organized the five tracks so they would flow musically, coincidentally, they also take listeners down a road that continues to darken around themes of hope, longing, past loves and depression. It starts with “Sibylle in an Orange Hue.” An introduction, lightly constructed with whimsical wind chimes, draws in listeners to an almost quiet meditation.

“I find music tends to send your mind’s eye to a certain place or time,” Carr says, “so adding the wind chimes and birds in the opening was to kind of set the stage for the beginning of the EP’s journey.”

Inspired by a German singer-songwriter named Sibylle Baier, Carr stumbled upon a photo of her labeled “Sibylle in an Orange Hue.” He used some of the word’s from the photo’s title as lyrics.

“In my mind, the song describes someone who is suffering from depression, and as the narrator, I’m trying to convince her that everything will be alright in the end,” he explains.

While Carr often involves his friends, William Glover (piano) and Sean McClain (drums), in his music, he, too, is quite a multi-instrumentalist. Mostly a self-taught guitarist playing along to Led Zeppelin records, his fingerstyle playing is heavily influenced by singer-songwriter and guitarist Nick Drake.

“I pretty much spent months trying to nail that kind of fingerstyle playing and now it’s an integral part of my music,” he notes. “I’ve always been interested in guitar growing up, but never really had the right reason or motivation to start playing. Once I heard ‘Black Dog’ on my dad’s copy of the fourth Led Zeppelin record, I really wanted to learn so I could play that song.”

Carr also plays bass, organ, ukulele, mandolin, glockenspiel (similar to a xylophone), and an Indian drone instrument called a “shruti box.” According to Carr, bass isn’t hard when starting with a foundation in guitar, “but it needs to be approached differently than the guitar.”

“Paying attention to bassists like Carol Kaye from the Wrecking Crew kind of gave me that light bulb moment,” he continues. “I started playing ukulele when I was a junior in high school after a friend brought his along on a field trip. Mandolin is a new instrument for me and I’ve really only played it seriously for about two or three years now. I just kind of love stringed instruments, so I end up collecting and playing them. . . . but I’m not the best mandolin player so sitting in a bluegrass jam would be catastrophic.”

Carr’s upcoming show at Ted’s will include performances of tunes from “When the Road Darkens.” He will play a few new songs as well, indicative of his influences from Nick Drake to Ryley Walker to Bon Iver. Lyrically, they are even more introspective, often dealing with feeling lost and trying to navigate life. What remains consistent is his

penchant for literature, as heard in “The Jaws of Hell.” “I took the title from a Radiohead lyric and the song makes a very loose connection to Dante’s ‘Inferno,’” Carr says.

In October, Carr recorded a few tracks featuring a flute and saxophone player, and Glover back on piano. The plan is to have two new records in 2020: an instrumental EP called “Vox Humana” and a full-length album.

“So far I haven’t settled on a title for the full-length record yet,” he notes. “I’ve got a few different titles that I’m kicking around right now, but I’m kind of waiting for the entire record to be finished before I decide on the title that feels right.”

DETAILS

PATRICK CARR

Friday, December 13, 7 p.m.

Live At Ted’s • 2 Castle St.

Cover: \$5 (cash only)

patrickcarrmusic.net
