

# Catherine finds wilderness in Nashville

BY STEPHANIE MCKAY, THE STARPHOENIX MAY 25, 2011



Saskatoon-born singer/songwriter Carrie Catherine

**Photograph by:** Submitted, The StarPhoenix

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## *Carrie Catherine CD release parties*

*Thursday and Friday, 8 p.m.*

### *The Refinery*

There is a heartbreaking longing on Rockabye, a song on Carrie Catherine's new album *Wilderness*. The song and its singer ache for a baby.

Today, the song retains a powerful sense of waiting. Catherine, on the other hand, can celebrate both the new album and her new addition, Eliot.

Balancing a coffee, bouncing baby boy and a conversation, Catherine sat down recently for an interview and explained how inextricably linked her lives as a musician and mother are.

"It's funny how these two processes have really evolved side-by-side and they're helping each other. Music is teaching me how to be creative and intuitive with Eliot and he's teaching me how to just play

with total abandon, be in the moment and really be bigger than I've ever been on stage," she said.

Wilderness is the product of years of work for Catherine. (The album's release was delayed after the musician found out she was pregnant.) The process began before Catherine even planned on an album. The catalyst was Colin Linden, a musician producer known for his work with Emmylou Harris and Bruce Cockburn. Catherine kept seeing his name on projects she loved.

Then, Catherine tried to snag a venue in Wakefield, Que., only to find out Linden was playing that very night. Catherine saw it as a sign and took the night off to attend his show. Things clicked, and the seeds of a new album were planted.

Catherine recorded the album with Linden in Nashville.

"When I finally got to Nashville and got the chance to sit down with Colin and jam, it was total magic. He would play the songs as if he'd played them a million times before, so we started talking about doing an album."

Wilderness also contains two songs co-written with Vince Melamed (who penned Trisha Yearwood's Walkaway Joe).

The album was nearly finished when Catherine found out she was expecting.

"I was in Nashville doing the last set of recordings. I bought a book called Taking Charge of Your Fertility because we'd been trying for years. The irony is that I was pregnant at the time," she said.

Catherine will embark on a western Canadian tour following her Saskatoon dates, on a sojourn appropriately titled the Baby on Board Tour. On a couple of Saskatchewan dates earlier this month, Catherine learned that touring with a baby comes with a unique set of challenges.

"The biggest challenge was sound check. I'm trying to be a mom, so we're having play time. Eliot loves cords so he's getting into everything. Then at some point I have to get on stage and find out how everything sounds. I'm on stage going 'A little more guitar and can we change his diaper?' "

Catherine said she's excited about the new live show, calling it better than anything she's done before. The singer will be accompanied by percussionist Hal Schrenk, who helped create a backdrop for the stage. The concerts will include set pieces and lighting to create a more theatrical atmosphere.

"It's just about bringing the theme to life. We've also used wilderness audio samples. It adds to the music and helps tell a story. It's also just a little more unique and expresses who I am," she said

## **THE FACTS**

Describe the album in two sentences: It's rootsy, live off the floor and I think it's very sensual with themes of motherhood and femininity. It crosses folk, roots and Americana and because I recorded it in the south, some soul made it in.

Favourite childrens' song: The foolproof song in the car when Eliot's freaking out is You Are My Sunshine. That song might make a special appearance on tour.

Favourite wilderness activity: Swimming, for sure. I can name some of the best swims in my life. I love the water and I grew up spending summers at the lake.

Best way to spend an afternoon: A perfect summer day involves a walk by the river, a great cafe and hanging out with Eliot and my husband Curtis.

New song you're most excited to play: I still always get chills performing Rockabye. It's something I wrote before Eliot was born about wanting to be a mom. It's a song that people really resonate with. Everybody seems to know somebody going through that. It's a song I'm really proud of.

Tour staples: A cooler of fresh fruit and a good book. Now we also have a stroller and a high chair.

Road trip theme song: Road Regrets by Dan Mangan and You Can Sleep While I Drive by Melissa Etheridge.

Last album you purchased: Repeat Offender by Peter Elkas.

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