

Mp3 Chris Warren - Beautiful Ruins



Chris Warren
Beautiful Ruins

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Mixing depth and whimsy, pop and folk, Lennon and McCartney, the minutiae of daily life and the big picture, and delivering it in a strangely intimate voice and deftly finger-picked guitar. 10 MP3 Songs POP: Beatles-pop, FOLK: Folk Pop Details: "Far headier fare than your average singer/songwriter disc. Drawing on themes ranging from evolution and extinction to regret and mortality, Warren aligns the microcosmic and macrocosmic... He frames his words with sophisticated, layered arrangements-hints of beat poetry, chamber and klezmer accents mesh with mature pop songwriting." Sarah Liss, NOW Magazine (Toronto) Chris Warren has been building a repertoire as distinctive as that of compatriots Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell for many years in his native Toronto. He's a brilliant guitarist whose production style incorporates global sounds matching the range of his lyrical concerns. He has just released his second CD, Beautiful Ruins. "Warren's eccentric and arresting pop-folk opus is...a fine expression of an independent musical spirit and a poet's heart. Beautiful Ruins is fascinating, avant-garde world music with retro-pop inflections and a serious literary intent." Greg Quill, The Toronto Star He started out as a poet, publishing in a variety of literary magazines and giving spoken word/music performances, but songwriting took over as the more immediate vehicle of communication. In the nineties, Chris joined a creative groundswell of new Toronto songwriters including Ron Sexsmith, Bob Snider, Kyp Harness, Andrew Cash and others. "Chris Warren has the soul of a poet (maybe Leonard Cohen's) and the eclectic tastes of an adventurer (maybe Sir Edmund Hillary's). He does it all, and does it deep, digging great songs from the mineshaft of eternal truth." Howard Druckman, UmbrellaMusic.com The current issue of folk magazine Penguin Eggs notes that, "Warren has played his share of local folk clubs, but the musical and lyrical sophistication on display here can't be easily contained within the folk label." Elsewhere his songs have been described as "Soft, iridescent folk-pop" and "A very palatable

model for what adult pop could and should be more like." Pop, folk or folk-pop, his songs appeal to anyone into words and ideas. Of Warren's current disc, reviewer Stuart Henderson says, "Warren's lucid, engaging writing is stronger here than ever. And it manages to accomplish that rare feat: it reads even as well as it sings." Warren is as likely to write about the defoliation of the planet earth as he is the more familiar terrains of love and loss. If Marley, Lennon and Dylan could be said to be pop music "prophets", Warren belongs to the same category. In other ages the job might have been called court fool. "Quirky, meandering melodies, a slightly distanced, effects-treated voice, improbable and dissonant instrumental intrusions and off-kilter harmonies occasionally detract from an immediate appreciation of Warren's wonderful lyrics, keen observations of the minutiae of urban living, of friendship, love and isolation. It's a mannered delivery that's...idiosyncratic and self-assured." Greg Quill, The Toronto Star

Warren's trek into studio production began with BONE, an EP cassette recorded at Toronto's Music Gallery, released in 1993. His first full-length CD Crazy Wisdom, was released in January 1997. It was the second release through the Urban Myth Recording Collective, founded by Warren and Mississaugan tunesmith Dan Bryk (Lovers Leap, Scratchie Records). Warren has produced others and throughout his career written his own arrangements for woodwinds, horns and strings. Warren produced and recorded Beautiful Ruins in his own studio, with bassist Maury Lafoy (The Supers, Starling), drummer Tom Bona of The Sue Foley Band, and others. Warren plays guitar, keyboards, woodwinds and percussion. "Beautiful Ruins these are not-there is a polished grace to many of these tracks.... Largely acoustic, and coloured by Warren's sometimes fragile, sometimes nasal, always comforting voice, the best of the songs betray a litany of uber-cool influences which any fan of art-folk should enjoy sussing out." Stuart Henderson, UmbrellaMusic.com.

Chris is currently mulling over a third album. MORE REVIEWS: Really there is nothing with more beauty than a ruin-it preserves the memory of its venerable past and offers a new transformation as an ever-changing nature-worn art installation. Chris Warren understands this and, on his sophomore record, examines the beautiful ruins, and the ruined beauty, surrounding his own life. Warren has eulogised in song everything from specific characters on Toronto's streets ("Hole on Bloor St.") and his cat ("Yaffa's in Her Twilight Years") to the entire human race ("All of You Hairless Apes"). But don't go thinking this is a grave affair. Warren's storytelling agility and experimental ear keep things light and exciting. His voice, a sort of older and higher pitched Kyp Harness (indeed, some may call it a beautiful ruin), is matched by a worldwide array of instrumentation, sometimes reminiscent of Bruce

Cockburn's Breakfast in New Orleans era. Let's hope Chris goes on to ruin more songs. -Brent Hagerman, Exclaim! Magazine. Chris Warren has the soul of a poet (maybe Leonard Cohen's) and the eclectic tastes of an adventurer (maybe Sir Edmund Hillary's). He does it all, and does it deep, digging great songs from the mineshaft of eternal truth. When he goes for a pretty, jangly-guitar-and-trumpet, pure-pop song like "Hole on Bloor Street," the hooks stay in your head for days. I was singing the unlikely line, "If your life's like a thin membrane that's stretched around some chaos" for days, and the way he sings "We're busy, we're busy, we're busy" will resonate with anybody who's ever worked in an office for more than three months. The "Dubious Elegy," for a troubled, near-pathetic rock 'n' roll junkie ghost, is a slow, droning, stutter-beat tune with a sing-song melody that also rattled around in my brain-pan for days on end. The drop-dead punch of "Beautiful Ruins" bears a sparse, spooky witness to war, specifically, in the Middle East: It's timeless, haunted, and riding on some of the fastest, cleanest string-plucking I've heard in years. And Warren can rock like a maniac, too-just listen to "Outside Time" when it kicks in. Really, there's nothing in the ruins that's not worth examining. Go buy it. -Howard Druckman, umbrellamusic.com

The best adjective to describe Toronto singer/songwriter Chris Warren might just be "idiosyncratic". He has an original and oft off-beat worldview and sound, and that makes Beautiful Ruins a refreshing listen. It is just his second full-length album, and it surfaces seven years after his debut, Crazy Wisdom, a record that drew praise from peers like Ron Sexsmith and Mary Margaret O'Hara. Warren has played his share of local folk clubs, but the musical and lyrical sophistication on display here can't be easily contained within the folk label. Instruments as varied as accordion, bassoon and flugelhorn are used to add subtle colourings on the songs. Warren is a published poet, and his strengths as a lyricist are considerable. One sample: "Intolerable pain cracks your face like lightning over a clear night sky" (Memory is Water). The album is dedicated "to our siblings, the great apes, now standing on the brink of extinction," and man's abuse of the planet and other species is explored in All of You Hairless Apes and Thanks...and Sorry. The evocative title song has something of an Al Stewart feel, and is an album highlight. Beautiful Ruins is one strong piece of work. -Kerry Doole, Penguin Eggs

Warren is a philosophical bard, dissecting the inner workings of spirituality, love, human potential, all on a deeply personal level. The unconventional lyrics, at times Absurdist in humour, are clearly paralleled in the surprising twists in melody and modulation. A romantic without gushing mush, Warren lays down a very palatable model for what adult pop could and should be more like. -Ernest J. Agbuya, RHIG Magazine

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