

CATIE CURTIS

***Stretch Limousine On Fire* ~ (Compass 4563) Street Date: August 30, 2011**



The Boston-area folk music scene is a vibrant one, boasting a variety of diverse artists. But if pressed to name the region's defining musician, it would have to be singer-songwriter Catie Curtis, who has called it home for nearly all of her twenty-year music career. Since the release of her last album in 2009, Curtis has toured extensively, playing a number of diverse venues ranging from Chicago's legendary Old Town School of Folk Music to the White House. She's also spent that time writing and testing out new material, developing a collection of masterfully written lyrics that serve as the heart of her newest record, *Stretch Limousine on Fire* (out August 30).

On the new album, Curtis, a Lilith Fair alum who's been dubbed a "folk-rock goddess" by *The New Yorker*, delivers some of the finest material of her career: ten original songs that push at her own musical boundaries and explore "the difficult edges of passing events" in life, harsh realities that are tempered with moments of fleeting beauty. This temporary nature of life is a theme that pervades the album from the first notes. Opening song "Let It Last, which features folk powerhouse and former tour mate Mary Chapin Carpenter singing harmony, finds Curtis pleading "I know it can't last/And all I ask is let it last a little longer."

The sound, like the subject matter, is rawer than Curtis' previous work, which has been featured on episodes of *Grey's Anatomy*, *Dawson's Creek* and several other hit shows. "There's a lot of texture that makes you feel like you're really close to it," she explains. Recorded live in Los Angeles' Stampede Origin Studio, *Stretch Limousine on Fire* harnesses the energy of her concerts, thanks in part to a fiercely talented band featuring drummer Jay Bellerose and bassist Jennifer Condos, both of whom are currently touring as part of Ray LaMontagne's Pariah Dogs. "When Jay Bellerose plays the drums, he's so tuned in that he's basically an extension of the guitar; sometimes you'll hear a wood knocking sound [on the record] and you don't know if it's me knocking on the guitar or Jay playing something on the drums that's very sympathetic with what I'm playing."

"My singing was inspired by their playing," says Curtis of her backing band. "It felt like a live performance, and engineer Ryan Freeland kept it sounding very present. [Producer] Lorne Entress and I put a lot of faith in the idea that if we brought together the right people...we would have the vibe that we wanted."

That vibe is spirited, unique, and best embodied by the album's title track. "Stretch Limousine on Fire" is an infectious song whose central image takes on the idea that "when bad things happen, you sometimes take comfort in realizing they happen to everybody." It's this portrayal of universal life experiences, wrapped in Curtis' brand of evocative songwriting that won her the 2006 International Songwriting Competition, that appeals to her legions of dedicated fans.

With her Aspire to Inspire Endowment providing musical instruments to seven youth-oriented music organizations, a busy schedule officiating nontraditional weddings, and the fulltime job of raising two daughters with her partner, Catie Curtis is stretching her own boundaries to ensure that, despite the rough edges in life, there will always be those moments of beauty.

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