

BIOGRAPHY:

CBC Galaxie Rising Star Award Winner **Peter Katz** was supposed to make a solo acoustic record... but, when the likes of **Academy Award Winner Glen Hansard** (The Swell Season, Once), Canadian Folk darlings **The Good Lovelies**, and steel-town siren **Melissa McClelland** agreed to sing along... plans changed.

Nevertheless, 'First of the Last to Know' marks the true arrival of Peter Katz, solo artist. Even with the good company on the record, Peter's voice and acoustic guitar remain the focal point throughout. After years of touring solo while selling a full-on band record, Katz got tired of the same feedback: "We wish you would make a record that sounds like you playing live".

Katz agrees: "My life is touring, and I'm dedicated to that, but at a certain point your record needs to do some leg-work for you. If the only way you can win someone over is live, then you need to go back to the drawing board and make a better record."

Working with long-time friend, tour-mate, singer-songwriter and producer Rob Szabo, the two scheduled regular meetings for 4 months, looking at every aspect of Peter's songs. "There were some definite tense moments, but I knew Rob was right and I had to put my ego aside and learn. We worked and worked and worked, just on the barebones of the songs and of the guitar and vocals, making sure every last word, every note, every groove, every picking pattern, every tempo was exactly where it needed to be. It was an amazing and awful experience," Katz says with a smile.

When it came time to finally record, they set up shop at the gorgeous Barn Window Studio on the escarpment outside Hamilton. "I didn't want to be in a booth and then have to try to add vibe using the computer. I wanted the space to inspire, to have its quirks and unique qualities in the moment. There's no question when I listen to this record, I hear that it was recorded in a big, beautiful barn. I mean, I got to sing while staring out at the night through a huge glass window... You can't get that in a booth."

One aspect of Katz's sound that remains true from his very first demos is his dedication to telling powerful stories. The stunning 'Oliver's Tune' is inspired by a CBC interview with the late Oliver Schroer, a Canadian fiddle player who passed away from Leukemia but decided to play one final concert a month before he died. 'The Fence' is a haunting song that imagines the experience of Matthew Shepard, the Laramie, Wyoming student who was tied to a fence and left to die one night because he was gay. And the soaring, cathartic title track, 'First of the Last to Know,' explores the story of anyone working to emerge as a fully realized human being.

Expressing both aching sadness and intense joy, Katz' songs, carried by his passionate, intimate voice, guide us through the gamut of human experience.

And if the record leaves you wanting more, he will be continuing his habit of playing 150+ dates a year. With tours already booked throughout Europe and North America in the first half of 2010, he's likely coming to a town near you. And if he isn't, drop him a line, he's known for making an effort to play wherever there are eager ears.