

Adam Baldwin Bio – Concertos & Serenades

With his sophomore full-length, *Concertos & Serenades*, Adam Baldwin - born and raised "inside these imaginary lines" that denote Nova Scotia - offers an east coast testimony that challenges the typical tourism marketing gloss. Through eight masterful yarns, the songwriter bears witness and pays tribute to a tradition of desperation: sinners and losers, perpetual failures, and down-and-out phantoms that haunt his home's coastlines and back roads - without a passing judgement. Some of the tales happened, some didn't, and most walk a tightrope between truth and fiction.

"I feel like a lot of these stories just kinda flew in on the west wind off Porter's Lake or off the Atlantic Ocean here," Baldwin says. "And there's a lot of stories to be told. Just from livin' out here, some of the people you meet - there're some hard, hard men and women out here who worked their asses off out on the ocean for decades. They're different types of people, man, and they've got different stories to tell, and I felt like they'd been left out of our song writing tradition for a few years."

In Baldwin's voice - salty with the flavour of a dialect he comes by honestly - those stories are done justice. The uneasy folk of "Causeway Road" strums out a family fishing tragedy and Danny Fingers' subsequent botched revenge; a ghost calls out to his wife from the bottom of a collapsed Springhill mine on the gossamer "No. 2 Colliery;" and across the water, a soldier reflects in the lonesome "A Plea to St. Peter." It's not all sorrow and tragedy, but no one's winning the lottery, either - unless you count getting lucky, like the gas jockey on the upbeat "Gerald Burgess RaceTrac Full Serve Autobody," or nearly outrunning the cops, post-stickup on the rollicking "Good Gracious." In the shadowy "Gone to the Dogs," Baldwin tells the story of a kid forsaken by God not once but twice. And with the dreamy "Lighthouse in Little Lorraine," he weaves an epic of drugs, betrayal, and murder at the edge of Cape Breton. As the protagonist and his sauced crew get booted from a church hall dance, you can almost hear "The Mull River Shuffle" float out the door, too - the other side of being, "halfway through a bottle of moonshine, getting all fired up."

Finally, though, "The Voice of The Eastern Passage (Wayne's Serenade)" offers a true success story. The song eulogizes legendary DJ Wayne Harrett, who founded Seaside FM (that's 105.9 on your dial) and died in late 2021 after a long battle with cancer. It's easy to imagine the doomed characters from the rest of *Concertos & Serenades* finding solace in Wayne's voice and choice of tunes as they light up a smoke and roll their car window down, and the relentless wash of waves and birdsongs continue on. Wayne is the shining example on the record of a local who did achieve his dream.

“But everybody else, man, they all fuck everything up,” Baldwin laughs. “And in my experience, that’s what we all do. We fumble the ball an awful lot - not just here, but everywhere. And it’s okay, because at the end of all this when we’re about to shut ‘er down, it’s better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all. It’ll all have been worth the try.”

It’s worth noting that *Concertos & Serenades* would not have been written without Martha Wainwright. As Baldwin tells it, in January 2020, he had, “a foot out the fucking door of this whole racket,” but had some final commitments to honour. One of those commitments was playing some songs for a French-Canadian TV show that Wainwright was hosting. When they broke for dinner, as she sat beside him in a north end Halifax restaurant, he got real with her.

“I was like, ‘I don’t think I got this in me anymore. I can’t write anything. I feel like I can’t get anything out of the place that I live, and I can’t move because my family’s here. So, I think it’s time for me to tap out.’” Baldwin says. “And she scolded me in that restaurant, like a dog.”

It’s a good thing, too, because *Concertos & Serenades* does nothing less than tell the other side of the story about, “a wind-battered people, who grow up with a callus over our whole body,” as the songwriter himself puts it.

Singer-songwriter Adam Baldwin has been a mainstay of the Atlantic Canada music scene for over a decade. Starting as a member of rock combo Gloryhound before joining Matt Mays & El Torpedo in 2009, Baldwin’s own music has continued to evolve since his award winning self-titled solo debut EP in 2013.

In 2016 Baldwin released his first full length album *No Telling When (Precisely Nineteen Eight-Five)* featuring the singles “Daylight” and “Anytime”. In 2019 he released the follow up *No Rest for the Wicked*, including “Salvation” and “Dark Beside the Dawn”.

In March 2020, with in person performances impossible due to COVID-19, Baldwin launched his **Cross-Country Chin Up** concert series, almost every Friday evening on YouTube. In addition to taking the opportunity every week to connect virtually with fans, he also raised funds for Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Red Cross Stronger Together Nova Scotia Fund, RCMP Fallen Officer Fund, and the Black Cultural Society for Nova Scotia. The online concert series also produced two digital EPs: *Chin Up Sessions* (his own songs) and *Songs for the Parlour* (cover tunes).