



A CLASSICAL ACT

SHE'S PERFORMED FOR ROYALS AND WORLD LEADERS, played concerts from Kathmandu to Carnegie



Hall and even counted the late Prince Philip as a pen pal. But while working on the songs for her latest album, *Once Upon a Time* (available on Nov. 3), Liona Boyd found herself

isolated alone, for months at her Palm Beach home during the COVID lockdown. With no audience to play for, Canada's "First Lady of the Guitar" crafted the tunes that "return to my strong classical influences through a largely instrumental album with a cinematic soundstage."

Boyd, 74, began conceiving some of the songs during "a creative period that began in 2018," drawing inspiration from everything from a performance of Schubert's *Notturmo* to daily walks

near her Palm Beach home. Three of the songs were actually written years earlier and reworked for this release.

The resulting studio album - her 30th - is vintage Boyd, with gorgeous dream-like instrumentals and a title track in which she sings about lost love. "I have always been a natural romantic," explains Boyd, who once famously dated former Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau. "Most of my song lyrics are a mix of reality and fantasy. I have been fortunate to have many men who have loved me," she says, "and the special ones usually weave their way into my lyrics."

Fans, meanwhile, have long enjoyed a love affair with her music. A multi-platinum-selling and five-time Juno winner, Boyd, who was born in the U.K. and grew up in Toronto, has been ranked among the greatest classical guitarists ever and, in 2022, received an upgrade to Officer of the Order of Canada.

Still, she says that this release, which comes nearly 50 years after her 1974 debut, "will be my last full-length album. And I think it's one of my finest ever."

-Mike Crisolago

Trailblazer Dolly Parton is at it again, this time hopping genres in a move that is turning the established tradition of "rock stars going country" on its head. Acts from Hootie & the Blowfish's Darius Rucker to rapper Kid Rock have made the shift, but few have done the reverse. On the album *Rockstar* (out Nov. 17), the 77-year-old doyenne of twang shelves the proverbial Stetson for guitar-goosed scorchers: There are 21 covers of the most BIC-lighter-worthy anthems, plus nine originals, all of them backed by a small army of cred-boosting marquee guests.

They include members of Judas Priest, Blondie, Heart, Bon Jovi, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Fleetwood Mac and the Doobie Brothers; plus, Elton John, Sting, Pat Benatar and Sheryl Crow, with many artists performing on the very songs they made famous.

The country crooner made her foray into the canon in 2022,

when the singer-songwriter was nominated for inclusion in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Though she initially demurred, Parton - a sterling combination of aw-shucks graciousness and towering smarts - then announced her intention to record a rock 'n' roll album to justify her inclusion. And so, here we are.

While Parton's many guests are a huge selling point,

Rockstar's contents aren't bad either, even if the world wasn't necessarily chomping at the bit for new versions of burnished chestnuts like *Stairway to Heaven*, *We Are the Champions* and *Purple Rain*.

Elsewhere, Parton's still-strong, inimitable voice imbues her god child Miley Cyrus' *Wrecking Ball* and the Beatles' *Let It Be* with heft. That Parton cut the latter track opposite Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr suggests she is beyond fearless and completely bulletproof against even a hint of novelty. -Kim Hughes

FROM DOLLYWOOD > TO DOLLYROCK



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