

KELLIE LODER

BIOGRAPHY

There is something truly extraordinary about Juno Award–nominee Kellie Loder.

It's there in her immensely poignant lyrics, which are set against dazzling, melodic folk/pop. And it's there in the singer/songwriter's electrifying live shows which simultaneously inspire profound emotion in listeners while cracking them up with sparkling anecdotes.

If Loder isn't breaking your heart, she's splitting your sides.

Those contrasting yet somehow complementary sensibilities doubtless stem from Loder's native Newfoundland and Labrador, a rugged and remote place steeped in storytelling tradition and where comedy and tragedy are twin markers for successfully navigating life, a point documented by legions of legendary artists from the region.

Loder is poised to ascend those rarefied ranks. For proof, witness her brilliant and emotive third album, *Benefit of the Doubt*, which elevates whatever subject Loder happens to be highlighting, from intoxicating love (the mesmerizing ballad "Playground") to the exquisite pain of growing apart (the downcast "Boxes," already a radio hit and winner of the 2017 MusicNL Video of The Year Award).

Whatever the theme, each song on *Benefit of the Doubt* soars on Loder's skilful piano, guitar, and especially on her radiantly soulful voice. That Loder also co-produced eight of *Benefit of the Doubt's* 10 original tracks "makes me feel more connected to this project than any other I've done before," she confirms.

"To some degree all these songs came relatively easy because I knew what I wanted to say. I could probably write five songs a day," she howls, "but that would take up all my time and brain power."

Indeed, the scope and skill of the songs on *Benefit of the Doubt* also handily demonstrate why Loder is fast-emerging as a sought-after songwriter both at home and Stateside among marquee collaborators including — but not limited to — Justin Gray (John Legend, Mariah Carey, Amy Winehouse), Ari Rhodes (Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Michelle Treacy), and acclaimed fellow Newfoundlanders Damhnait Doyle and Jerry Stamp.

Anyone who has heard Loder or watched her perform knows one thing is certain: she is a towering talent about to explode on the world stage... even though the self-deprecating musician would probably rather implode than cop to such a lofty claim.

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“I feel like I am writing songs all the time,” Loder says. “I have about a million little ideas recorded on my iPhone. But the process is never the same way twice. I can overhear something when I am out. Or I can wake up and just start singing into my phone.

“With this album, I really want to get people talking,” she adds, specifically citing the song “Molded Like a Monster.” Cut in Los Angeles with Justin Gray (who produced the track at his studio), the arresting lyric-driven “Molded” questions our tendency to judge others, often about things beyond people’s control, like gender or even occupation.

“That song kind of fell into my lap as I was driving in St. John’s,” Loder explains. “I had just seen the movie *American Sniper* which I found very impactful. There were so many different kinds of people in that movie and none of them got to choose who they were, to choose their mold. They were just born into it. I was in the bathtub of my parents’ house, of all places, when the chorus came to me. And it was boom, done!”

More than just underscoring Loder’s deep disavowal of intolerance, “Molded Like a Monster” also signals her move towards more secular subject matter. “I am still a very spiritual person, still a believer,” says the native of tiny Badger, Newfoundland (population 900), whose 2012 album *Imperfections & Directions* netted a Contemporary Christian/Gospel Album of the Year Juno nod. Her debut, *The Way*, dropped in 2009.

Loder continues: “But I felt limited as to what I could write about when I was a Christian artist. Now I feel like I have more freedom to express myself the way I want to and to become the songwriter and performer I want to become.”

New single “Telescope” is a handy snapshot of Loder at her most persuasive. Written with several others and also cut in Los Angeles with Gray (the balance of *Benefit of the Doubt* was recorded in St. John’s with co-producers Ian Foster and Daniel Adams), the propulsive, super-catchy “Telescope” is a knock-kneed love song for the ages, framing Loder’s vivid lyrics with an almost conversational vocal delivery.

Despite her love of performing — at which she is exceptionally gifted, gliding effortlessly between keyboard and guitar while enthraling audiences with those priceless, above-mentioned anecdotes — Loder admits, “I really, really want to be a songwriter who is sought-after, someone people line up for months to write with. That’s the ultimate goal.”

To that end, Loder recently inked a worldwide publishing deal with Pandynamonium Music Publishing where she plans to fully explore co-writing opportunities, building on a sterling CV that already includes penning music for tour operators Ocean Quest Adventures, and being covered by rising star Rachel Cousins, among others.

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“Co-writing for me is like showing up at someone’s house to paint a picture but they have different colours than I have,” she says. “There is another perspective to see, and I think co-writing makes songs even better.

“I remember sitting in a session with Ari Rhodes and thinking, ‘How did I get here?’ I am from a tiny town in Newfoundland and he’s really good.’ And it dawned on me that I must be really good, too, in order to be here. That was a powerful experience.

“Someone once told me that songs are never finished,” Loder says. “At some point, you just have to stop because there are so many ways you can go about creating a song. For me a song is finished when it feels right; when I have painted the picture, said what I wanted to say the way I want to say it. And that’s how this album feels to me. It feels... complete.”