



## featured album

**Corb Lund**  
*Horse Soldier! Horse Soldier!*  
 Stony Plain Records

ADAM GAUMONT  
 Editor-in-Chief

Corb Lund might be a cowboy who plays music, but branding him as a country musician is a hairy prospect indeed.

For his fifth and best album, Lund has written about what he knows best: horses. Having ridden his previous album, *Hair in My Eyes Like a Highland Steer*, into newfound frontiers of success, the Taber native wisely decided to stick with this *Equus* equation again.

But gone are the innocent rodeo rhymes that defined *Highland Steer*. *Horse Soldier* is saddled with a much heavier load: songs like “I Wanna Be

in the Cavalry,” “Brother Brigham, Brother Young,” and the eponymous “Horse Soldier, Horse Soldier” take on topics such as war, religion, and death respectively.

There’s a timeless aspect to Lund’s folky, familiar sound—and, in the case of horses, with his subject matter as well. This is the theme of the title track, which takes us through much of the history of horse warfare from Little Bighorn to Genghis Khan, but which leaves us thinking about the present when he says “You’ll know that it was with them that I stood /

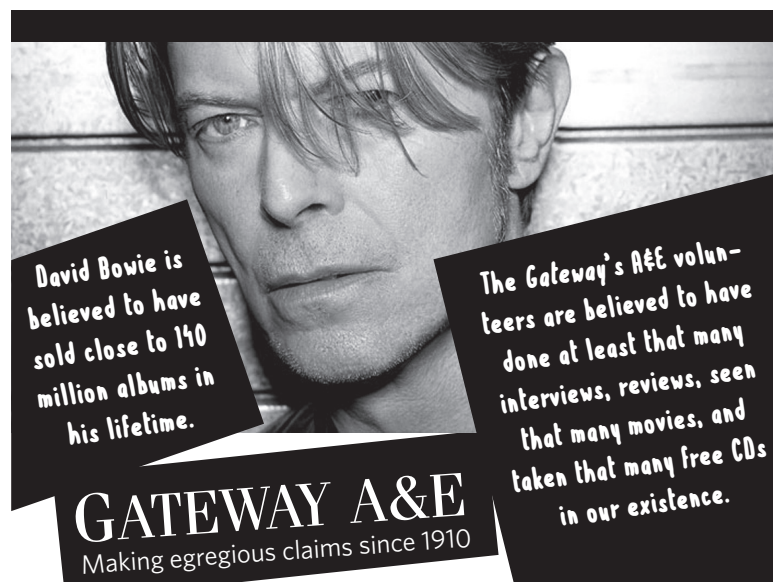
When Mayerthorpe, she cried, as her

four horsemen died / Gunned down in scarlet, coldest blood.”

Despite these dark overtones, Lund’s playfulness, creativity, and pride in where he comes from remain strong throughout. Songs like “The Horse I Rode in on,” “Hard on Equipment (Right Tool for the Job),” and “Family Reunion” all remind us that there’s a little Hurtin’ Albertan in all of us—and in the witty, non-judgmental way that only the most gifted songwriters possess.

“There’s somethin’ about horses,” Lund sings, “especially a paint / whenever I see horses / I see a path I didn’t take.” Armed with this Cavalier attitude, Lund defies country music’s current formulaic boundaries, changing his spots at will and bounding through cultural and musical borders with an uplifting gait that’s sure to win over even the most hifalutin’ city slickers.

Check out the editor’s playlist at [thegatewayonline.ca](http://thegatewayonline.ca) to hear select tracks from *Horse Soldier*.



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## albumreview

**Black Dahlia Murder**  
*Nocturnal*  
 Metal Blade Records

KELSEY TANASIUK  
 Arts & Entertainment Staff

The Black Dahlia Murder does death metal proud on *Nocturnal*, their fifth album. Rolling, manic drumbeats and gritty guitars rule this album with the iron fist it rightfully deserves. But as dark, and foreboding as their album art is, *Nocturnal* is just an average sacrifice to the metal gods: it covers the bases but doesn’t really yield

anything new.

With titles like “What a Horrible Night for a Curse,” “To a Breathless Oblivion,” and “I Worship Only What You Bleed,” *Nocturnal* seems to be following the metalcore playbook, although rapid drumbeats will keep you headbanging and moshing in an

imaginary pit for most of the record.

Aside from drums, the only thing saving *Nocturnal* from complete mediocrity is singer Trevor Strnad’s impressive vocal abilities. He exhibits some measure of vocal training or, at the very least, a lot of practice in the shower. His skill in alternating between equally taxing, inhaled screams, hardcore shrieking, and deep, throaty growls provides interest for an otherwise generic album.

Strnad’s benevolent vocal suicide saves listeners from the boredom brought on by ten tracks of pure death metal. It also shows great disregard for pulmonary health, but that’s beside the point—this is death metal, after all. Few things are more metalcore than sounding like death with the black lung.



## albumreview

**Keith and Renée**  
*Revolution*  
 KAR Music Group

CHRIS NOVAK  
 Arts & Entertainment Writer

For the past ten years, Keith Macpherson and Renée Lamoureux have been playing shows across North America under the name Easily Amused. Last year, the group garnered some unexpected mainstream exposure when Keith, on a whim, made it into the top 22 of *Canadian Idol*.

Now that the show has ended, Keith and Renée are back with a new name, a new sound, and a new album—fittingly

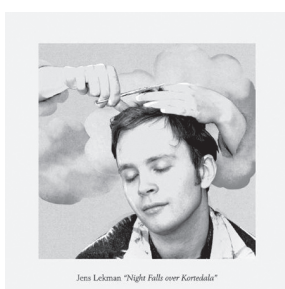
titled *Revolution*. After the mainstream exposure the band received from *Canadian Idol*, they know that this album is their chance to break out after a decade of obscurity, and it shows: you can almost hear the clock ticking in the back of their minds. It’s now or never for Keith and Renée.

Of the two parts of the duo, Renée is, without question, the dominant force on the album, which is really a shame. Renée

does have a sweet voice, and she shines in the quiet moments on the album, but when the songs reach their inevitable climax, things begin to go sour.

In her very forced attempts to “rock out,” Renée’s voice is strained beyond its limits, such as in the dreadful “Wake Up,” a tune where her vocals quickly become grating and unappealing. Keith, on the other hand, has one of those rare voices that manages to simultaneously seem vulnerable, powerful, and distinctive, as he demonstrates on the album’s highlight, “Surprise Yourself.”

There are some truly beautiful, tender moments on *Revolution*, but these are overshadowed by howling choruses and pop clichés. Keith and Renée push themselves beyond where they should go and, in doing so, come off looking like they’re trying way too hard to succeed.



## albumreview

**Jens Lekman**  
*Night Falls Over Kortedala*  
 Secretly Canadian

SIMON YACKULIC  
 Arts & Entertainment Writer

With a small and inconsistent variety of solid, memorable tunes, *Night Falls Over Kortedala* finds itself stuck between honest oldies rock beats, catchy dance rhythms, and tracks containing surreal synthesizer-led concertos—all traversed by Jens Lekman’s unique borderline-guttural voice.

These synthesizers on “And I Remember Every Kiss” smoothly increase in tempo while transitioning to “Sipping on the Sweet Nectar,” an upbeat look at the pleasure of recalling fond memories.

Here, his lyrics seem deep and philosophical; at other times, they seem bizarre, disconnected, or amusing. “I’d be Snowphish / You’d be Sunny / We could start a little farm with little white bunnies / Just cause watching them copulate is very funny,” he croons on “Friday Night at the Drive in Bingo.”

Tracks names, however, will be recognized more for bluntness than for creativity, as exhibited on “I’m Leaving You Because I Don’t Love You.” This sort of thought given to track names is to be expected from a guy who titled his 2004

debut *When I Said I Wanted to Be Your Dog*.

The highlights of *Night Falls* are its last few moments, easily worth sitting through the first three quarters of the album for. In fact, if you don’t have much patience for music your grandmother could spend hours mutually enjoying, skip right to “Kanske Ar Jag Kar I Dig” (which apparently is Swedish for “it took me eleven tracks to get my groove on.”)

Here, Jens explores the difficulty he has (or had) talking to a girl, doing so over the catchiest riffs and tracks on the entire album. A variety of instruments and an ear-pleasing harmony set “Kanske Ar Jag Kar I Dig” apart from the rest of *Night Falls*.

*Night Falls Over Kortedala* is a highly original release—at least for an album in the 21st century. Listeners might be annoyed by some of Lekman’s old-timey tracks, but audiophiles should give the release a listen, if only to expand their creative ear.

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