

Chris Luedecke

*Domina Cancellaria; praesento vobis **Christophorum Luedecke, "Senem" vocatum, ut admittatur ad gradum Doctoris in Jure Civili (honoris causa).***

While at university for his first degree, Chris Luedecke was introduced to what he has described as “this sort of rhythmic weird out-of-tune drum with strings on it.” With his characteristic talent for investing the ordinary with wonder, he went on, “I was just so gobsmacked to discover this thing.” The “thing” in question was a banjo, which has become in the years since his instrument of love both because it is what he plays most often, and because it has become the bespoke vehicle of his various passions.

Since his first commercially released album, 2006’s, *Hinterland*, Luedecke has delivered his complex lyrics, both self-reflective and world-reflective, in memorable melodies that charm and haunt, and that stretch the bluegrass strings of his signature instrument into unfamiliar genres. In seven studio albums to date his songs trace a deeply personal history of love, work, art, family, friendship, religion, and politics that at the same time appeal to diverse audiences across age groups, provinces, and nations. For many years a resident of Chester, his songs frequently evoke an intense sense of place that lend a Nova Scotian inflection to the lyrics that have become life-soundtracks for countless individuals and families. From the anthemic exuberance of songs like “I Quit My Job” and “Big Group Breakfast” to the intensely personal and contemplative “Wake Up Hill” and “Inchworm,” Luedecke portrays life’s highs and lows in community and in isolation. His songs track generational anxieties from the economic of “Low on the Hog,” to the political of “Death of Truth.” He has conveyed the sweet nostalgia of family life in “The Early Days,” channeled the power of artistic inspiration in “My Hands are on Fire,” and returned again and again, in songs like “Joy of Cooking” and “Sardine Song,” to the supra-sensible power of food to consecrate friendship and instantiate *joie de vivre*. In “I Wanna Go” there is religion. And everywhere—but *everywhere*—there is love, as the power of attraction and mutual sustenance, songs like “At the Airport,” to “Tender is the Night” to “Yodelady,” and so many more.

In tours and performances Luedecke has collaborated with numerous musicians and groups locally, nationally and internationally, including Symphony Nova Scotia, Rose Cousins, Kim Barlow, Christine Fellows, Tim O’Brien, former King’s Assistant Director of Music Nick Halley, and King’s alum Ben Caplan. In 2019, he was an extremely popular guest narrator for “A King’s Christmas” with the Chapel Choir. On May 21 in Halifax, he will perform with legendary singer-songwriter Loudon Wainwright III. Luedecke has won several awards over his career, notably Juno awards in 2009 and 2011 for solo Roots and Traditional Album of the Year and multiple East Coast Music Awards in 2014.

For many years, Chris Luedecke has been visiting the King’s campus to sing and speak to students. Many of his fellow graduates in the class of 2020/2021 here present heard him in their first days at King’s in one of the exclusive September concerts he performed during Orientation Week. Madam Chancellor, for his contributions to music and culture with the charm of a troubadour and the wisdom of a senator, I ask you, in the name of King’s College, to bestow upon Chris “Old Man” Luedecke the degree of Doctor of Civil Laws, *honoris causa*.