

April Verch is nominated for Juno Award for her newest CD

By Terry Fleurie
Staff Writer

Rankin – April Verch has been nominated for a Juno Award for a CD she released last April that pays homage to her earliest musical influences.

Her “*Once a Day*” recording is one of five albums nominated in the *Traditional Roots Album of the Year* category along with Miranda Mulholland, Natalie McMaster, Sugar & Joy, and Assiniboine and The Red for the 2020 Juno to be announced March 15 in Saskatoon.

Ms. Verch, a native of Rankin who has been entertaining audiences nationally and internationally with her unique fiddling, step-dancing and vocal performances for many years, is currently touring in the U.S. She said while some people might say it sounds a bit cliché to say it’s nice to be nominated, it really is true.

“The music business can be tough, no matter how much you love being part of it, and receiving a nod like this from our national music award feels like a great acknowledgement of the hard work and sacrifice that goes into having a career in music and making recordings,” she said.

She said she has never forgotten something her parents, Ralph and Muriel, told she and sister Tawnya many years ago.

“They taught Tawnya and I, while growing up competing, that we were always competing against ourselves more than anything else, and that win or lose, if it all happened again tomorrow with different judges, the results would be very different. I think that’s a beautiful reminder that while this is a lovely acknowledgement of what I’m trying to do as a musician, that there are a lot of other worthy nominees as well, and that I am very lucky to do what I do and to have been nominated this time around.”

Ms. Verch said when a recording is submitted for consideration for a Juno Award, a jury decides who is nominated and who wins. She said it can sometimes be difficult to select the correct category for a submission.

“When you submit for an award, you have to decide yourself which category to enter,” she explained. “Sometimes that can be tricky, especially if your music falls between the cracks.”

She noted there is a *Contemporary Roots, Traditional Roots and Instru-*

mental Album categories to choose from and each has its own guidelines to define that category.

“Sometimes it’s difficult to ascertain what makes the most sense for your recording. You’re not able to submit to more than one category in most cases, so you have to do your best and hope that you choose correctly.

“This time around, my album really only fit in the *Traditional Roots* category in my mind, so the choice was much easier than some of my recordings which were more varied in genre, and which were more of a mix of vocals and instrumentals than *Once A Day*.”

The fact her father performed on two of the numbers on the recording and her parents attended the recording in Nashville, makes the nomination extra special for her.

“It means a great deal to me indeed,” she remarked. “Mom and Dad have been such a tremendous part of my music and career, every single step of the way.

“So, the fact they had an extra special connection to this recording, were there in Nashville in the studio for part of it being made, that Dad sings on it, means the world to me,” she continued.

She was in an airport when she learned of the nomination and immediately called home and asked to speak to, “Ralph Verch, Juno Nominee”.

“I could tell even over the phone, how pleased they both were,” she said. “I also told Dad that I should have had him sing on my albums much sooner, that I probably would have won more nominations over the years, and he just laughed.”

Ms. Verch noted her intent in the recording was to honour the legends she grew up listening to and who influenced her early musical stylings, so to be nominated has a bigger significance to her.

“It’s a bit hard to explain, but I feel this nomination is much bigger than and more important than me. My intent in recording this particular project was to honour the legends in this field, who came before me, the Ottawa Valley musicians and songwriters who inspired and encouraged me, and to pay tribute to an era and genre of music that touches my soul in a way no other does.”

She said she has a deep emotional connection to the songs, the music, and to those who created it before

her. “I really wanted to get it right and pay proper tribute,” she remarked. “If I could only pick one album from my entire recording career to be nominated for a Juno, I would not hesitate in picking *Once A Day* for that very reason.

“To me, this nomination is not for me, it’s for the Valley people, musicians and music,” she added. “I am so proud of them and of us.”

Well Received

Ms. Verch said since its launch the album has been well received, has made several country, roots and folk charts on radio and has been selling well, both online and at her live shows. She admitted it is hard to judge exactly how it is doing because there are so many factors involved.

“But I’ve been really happy with the response over all and the fact I’m just so proud of this recording personally really trumps everything.”

Busy Touring

Since the release of the album, Ms. Verch has been touring non-stop, noting the balance of 2019 was real busy, as is 2020 and it’s looking like 2021 will be as well. The dates have primarily been in North America, with a few overseas dates, however, next year she plans to be in Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Australia. Amid all that, she plans to start working on her next recording, which gets planned on the road and recorded in between tours.

“I feel fortunate and thankful to have these great opportunities and just do my best to keep up and make them happen,” she said. “I read somewhere that ‘success is being faithful in what you have been called to do’ and I try to live by that, especially when it gets overwhelming, because I do feel this is what I’ve been called to do and I do want to be faithful in that.”

Despite her hectic schedule, she managed to get home to Rankin for two weeks at Christmas, admitting she does get very homesick on the road.

“I’m not complaining. I know that’s just part of it, but the reality is it never gets any easier. So, having brief trips home to visit helps me stay focused and gives me that chance to re-connect in person, which is very important to me.”

Regrettably, she will not be able to attend the Juno ceremony as she is on tour. This is her second Juno

nomination, her first coming in 2002 for her album, *Verchosity*.

She said she is either friends with, has performed with or has listened

to and admires her fellow nominees in the category.

“The music community is pretty small and since these nominees all

play a similar genre of music, I suppose that is to be expected, but it also means we are all cheering each other on and can share in the fun together.”



Rankin musician April Verch’s latest album, *Once A Day*, which was released in April 2019, has been nominated for a Juno Award in the *Traditional Roots Album of the Year* category.