

"I finally realized that what mattered to me more than a career in music, is a *life* in music. All the disparate things I do have added up to a rich life in music that I'm very grateful for."

Country singer Laura Cantrell has balanced different aspects of her music life over the course of a 20-plus years career, whether as a recording artist, radio host, writer, or working parent of a high-school aged musician. Well-known as a recording artist with a devoted following in the US and UK, and as the host of "Dark Horse Radio," a program devoted to George Harrison on SiriusXM's The Beatles Channel, or as a performer curating "States of Country," her monthly live series exploring regional diversity in country music, Cantrell has expressed her passion for country music through various platforms. This June she returns with "Just Like A Rose: The Anniversary Sessions," an album of original music celebrating her first 20 years of striking this balance. "Just Like A Rose" is a buoyant collection showcasing Cantrell's songcraft, sense of history, and conviction as a modern woman singing country music.

"I thought I had figured it all out!" Cantrell muses, as she describes her initial puzzlement in the fall of 2019 of how to acknowledge the approaching 20th anniversary of her first album. "I knew I wanted to celebrate different aspects of my experience of making music, working with old friends and new collaborators in places that had been significant to my music life. I wanted to create something more of an ongoing celebration than a traditional album. The idea of recording and releasing a series of singles more or less in real time was intriguing, so I started a crowd funding and launched it" Cantrell leans in for emphasis, "on March 1, 2020." Within days the world was a very different place, and Cantrell placed her plans on hold while the pandemic raged in her neighborhood in Jackson Heights, NY and throughout the world. Slowly and fitfully she pushed on while restrictions and delays changed the timeline and shape of her plans. "We moved so slowly I thought 'this isn't even happening!' But sure enough, with the help of some great 'music people' the songs emerged." Unable to travel freely, Cantrell held sessions in New Jersey and Nashville guided by producers David Mansfield, Rosie Flores and Ed Stasium, Don Fleming, and Paul Burch, and featuring guests Steve Earle and Buddy Miller. "There was a risk in working with different producers that the result would feel disjointed, but I truly love where this whole project landed. Having come through the gauntlet of the pandemic, I felt so much joy in the process, I hope people hear and feel that in the tracks themselves."

Since 2000, Cantrell has released "Not The Tremblin' Kind," "When The Roses Bloom Again," "Humming By The Flowered Vine," "Kitty Wells Dresses: Songs of the Queen of Country Music," "No Way There From Here," and "The BBC Sessions." She has toured extensively in the US, UK and Ireland, and was a favorite of pioneering British DJ John Peel, who called her first album, "Not The Tremblin' Kind," "my favorite record of the last ten years, and possibly my life." Cantrell recorded several Peel Sessions for the BBC from 2000-2004 and appeared on the first Peel Day program on Radio One commemorating the first anniversary of Peel's death.

Cantrell's music has been celebrated in the press, including features in the New York Times, "O" Magazine, Elle, the Wall Street Journal, The Sunday Times of London, and Maverick Magazine. Cantrell's music has been featured on NPR's "All Things Considered," "On Point" and "Weekend Edition" and the BBC's "Women's Hour." She has performed on "A Prairie Home Companion,"

"Mountain Stage," and the "Grand Old Opry," and appeared on the television programs "Late Night With Conan O'Brien," and BBC One's "The Andrew Marr Show." She is currently the host of "Dark Horse Radio," SiriusXM's program about George Harrison that runs on The Beatles Channel, and "States of Country" on the streaming service, GimmeCountry.

"Just Like A Rose" features songs Cantrell wrote in Nashville with acclaimed cowriters Gary Burr, Fred Wilhelm, and Mark Winchester, and with longtime collaborator and guitarist Mark Spencer, as well as tunes written by Amy Rigby and Joe Flood, artists Cantrell knew from the roots music scene in New York in the 1990s. The material spans Cantrell's most recent songwriting and songs she's been humming to herself since before she'd had her own band or played her own shows. "It is interesting maturing into your musical worldview, you still have songs that hit you like you're a teenager with your first crush, and others that reflect more experience and nuance, or frustration with tough realities, and then those you just love purely as music – there's a bit of it all on this album."