

OCTOBERMAN FORTRESSES



BIOGRAPHY

When last we heard from Marc Morrissette and his Octoberman project, the songwriter was openly declaring his desire to Run From Safety. Fittingly, Octoberman's sophomore album found the vocalist/guitarist dispensing with the folksy troubadour identity he established for himself on debut *These Trails Are Old and New*, enlisting a band of diverse players and experimenting with a more expansive and dynamic sonic palette.

Fortresses – Octoberman's third full-length – sees Morrissette and his band distancing themselves even further from any notion of comfort or security. While the evocative title certainly lends itself well to Octoberman's formidable new sound, it also allows the record's frequent instances of aching vulnerability to catch an unsuspecting listener completely unaware. Marking Octoberman's most cohesive and adventurous effort to date, *Fortresses* revels in the ghosts that emerge and raw nerves that are exposed when old defences fall.

While employing his usual cast of collaborators – C.L. McLaughlin (guitars, background vocals), Rob Josephson (drums), Graham Christofferson (bass), Leah Abramson (background vocals), Anju Singh (violin, viola), Shaun Brodie (trumpet), Jessica Wilkin (piano), Sarah Hallman (background vocals) – Morrissette made the decision to leave his adopted Vancouver home to record the album in two unfamiliar cities with a pair of accomplished producers.

The construction of *Fortresses* first found Octoberman holing up with Dave Draves (Julie Doiron, Kathleen Edwards) in Ottawa, Ontario. As the city endured a snowstorm for the ages, Morrissette and his cohorts kept warm by tracking Octoberman's most incendiary songs to date. The triumvirate of "51," "Scenesters" and "Ceiling Floor" find Morrissette's melodic sensibilities augmented by wailing feedback and menacing distortion. Elsewhere, the slinking "Dancing With Your Ghost" and slow-burning "I Know A Nurse" travel more seductive courses in working their way under a listener's skin.

Next, Octoberman encamped in Portland, Oregon with Larry Crane (Elliott Smith, Stephen Malkmus, Cat Power). Primarily recorded live off the floor, the session captured a more intimate and subdued Octoberman, highlighted by the gorgeously spare ukulele-and-piano piece "Thirty Reasons." Album closer "Portland Hotel" offers similar atmospheric, minimal beauty, while "I Was Wrong" conjures a wealth of heartache and "Trapped in the New Scene" paints a portrait of abject loneliness.

Fortresses also marks Morrissette's most thematically unified work as a wordsmith. Examining a variety of relationships – whether they involve "fans" and music ("The Backlash," "Scenesters"), neighbouring nations ("51") or two lovers ("Dancing With Your Ghost," "Thirty Reasons," "I Was Wrong") – the melancholic record ultimately emerges as an unabashed break-up album in every conceivable sense. Throughout the song cycle, Morrissette and his compatriots chart the end of love affairs, innocence, sovereignty and music scenes with both insight and inventiveness.

Quite appropriately, after completing an album that documented "endings" with such openness and aplomb, Morrissette brought his extended tenure in Vancouver to a close. Along with guitarist/vocalist C.L. McLaughlin, Morrissette relocated to Toronto and recruited a new complement of players to complete the East Coast Octoberman line-up.

After earning critical praise from the likes of Pitchfork Media, Uncut and Americana UK (Album of 2007), appearing at the SXSW, Pop Montreal, Sled Island and CMJ festivals and extensively touring North America and Europe, Octoberman now begins a bold new chapter built upon the sturdy foundation of *Fortresses*.

Artist: Octoberman

Title: Fortresses

Format: CD / LP / Digital

Catalogue #: WW016

Barcodes:

6 23339 13222 0 (CD)

6 23339 13221 3 (LP)

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TRACKLISTING

- 01 The Backlash
- 02 Dancing With Yer Ghost
- 03 Trapped In The New Scene
- 04 I Know A Nurse
- 05 Thirty Reasons
- 06 Temptation Is A Bloody Mess
- 07 I Was Wrong
- 08 51
- 09 Scenesters
- 10 Ceiling Floor
- 11 Another Trial
- 12 Portland Hotel

MEDIA

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<http://myspace.com/octoberman>

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