



# World of Wonders: The Lyrics and Music of Bruce Cockburn

*James A Heald*

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**World of Wonders** is an appreciation of the lyrics and music of the iconic Canadian Singer-Songwriter-Guitarist Bruce Cockburn. This book is the first comprehensive look at the works of Bruce Cockburn from the 1960's to the Present.

Bruce Cockburn is, first and foremost, a visionary artist; engaging and probing songwriter, spiritual seeker, truth teller, and extraordinary guitarist. He is a songwriter's songwriter and musician's musician. If you measure success in album sales, or chart position, or merchandise sales, or mentions in *People Magazine* or *Rolling Stone*, then Bruce is not for you. While he has failed to scale the mountain of popular adoration in the United States market, he has nonetheless had an extraordinary career as a Canadian solo artist, and he's done it pretty much entirely on his terms. Given our America Centric view of the entertainment industry (and pretty much everything else), it is hard for us to realize how big a star Bruce is in Canada. It's also hard for us to realize that success outside the U.S. actually means something. We should count ourselves lucky that we have found Bruce and other kindred spirits like South Africa's Johnny Clegg or Australia's *Midnight Oil*. There are very few musicians who have recorded for more than 40 years, putting out consistently good records every couple of years, with few, if any, artistic misfires. He's sold a lot of albums and won a lot of awards. He has continued to gain in popularity and plays to packed venues across Canada, the United States, and Europe, with occasional forays to Japan and the Far East.

He has traveled to war-torn locations like Central America, Africa, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq as an observer and good will ambassador. The songs that have resulted from these journeys celebrate the resilience of the human spirit, chide the powerful and greedy, and turn a spotlight on corruption and injustice. He would most likely bristle at these thoughts, preferring to consider his successes a matter of luck, or simply the result of dogged persistence or even stubbornness.

"In sharp contrast to the condescending and ill-judged evangelical slant of Brian Walsh's recent book on Canadian singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn (which I reviewed in *Third Way* and for *The Matthews House Project*) James A. Heald takes an informed and intelligent approach to Cockburn's albums and songs, contextualising and appraising the work under a series of headings mostly within a linear timeline..."

from Review by Rupert Loydell of *Stride Magazine*, UK - full review at

<http://www.stridemagazine.co.uk/Stride%20mag%202012/Nov%202012/World%20of%20Wonders%20rev.htm>

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