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5 ARTISTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



ORDINARY ELEPHANT OPELOUSAS, LA.

Sharing Their Pure Folk Finesse

“We’ve been careful and reckless, fortunate and unlucky, fulfilled and let down, brave and hesitant, but we’ve always moved forward toward who we are.” So say **Crystal** and **Pete Damore**—the married couple who make music under the aegis of a folk duo dubbed **Ordinary Elephant**—in a collective statement. Over the course of the past decade, Crystal and Pete have maintained a robust tour schedule and received ongoing critical acclaim. Occasionally compared to Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris or Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, their supple harmonies and beautiful, beguiling melodies brought them the International Folk Music trophy for Artist of the Year courtesy of their breakout album, *Before I Go*. Two years later, they returned with *Honest*, which the *Associated Press* hailed as “one of the best Americana albums of the year.” It’s little surprise then that those in folk music’s hierarchy—Tom Paxton and Mary Gauthier, among them—have taken notice and become devoted fans. The way the Damones tell it, their evolution has been natural. They say, “Our albums have moved along with us, landing on what we do live, with our most recent record being just the two of us.” The album they’re referring to is their current eponymous effort, a solo set of sorts, which resulted in their purest and most personal offering yet. Overseen by producer and multi-instrumentalist Dirk Powell, it maintains a decidedly stripped-down sound, which allows them to bare their emotions without becoming entangled in overly fastidious arrangements. “With Crystal being more of the lyrical leaning one, our process has typically involved starting with songs that she writes, then moving into editing, arranging, and finalizing them together,” Pete says. Crystal then adds, “However, our intentional writing practices over the last decade have allowed Pete to discover his writing voice, which has led to some new songs that have flipped our typical process around. We’re excited to incorporate this creative expansion in our next project.” That said, Ordinary Elephant insist that they don’t know where their trajectory will lead them. “We haven’t figured out exactly where we plan to go from here sonically,” they claim. “So we’re open to exploring new spaces. But it will always be about the songs, what they are asking of us, and how they are helping us discover ourselves and our connection with others.” ordinaryelephant.net **Lee Zimmerman**

