

Carly Rae Jepsen



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Without it, this Vancouver-based musician would never have left her Mission, B.C. She has since then produced an acclaimed debut album (2008’s *Tug of War*), a **certified singles** (“Bucket,” “Tug of War”) and –to top it all –two 2010 **Juno Award**

nominations for Best New Artist and Songwriter of the Year.

She also wouldn’t have *Curiosity*. That’s her new EP, a collection of heart-on-sleeve pop songs about, fittingly enough, life’s biggest curiosity—love, and all the complications that come with it. Its sound—a blend of confessional lyrics, sweet acoustic gems and straight-up pop—is just as strangely fascinating, not least of all to Carly herself. How she stumbled upon one of its main inspirations is still something of a wonder.

She was doing what she does—writing music—when something truly curious sneaked up on her. That thing was a song called—what else?—“**Curiosity**.” Like much of her new EP, it was crafted with long-time collaborator, writer/producer **Ryan Stewart**, and it’s about a girl (“or me,” she laughs) hung up on a bad boy, a guy she knows is no good, but she’ll never stop thinking about. The subject is a universal push-and-pull, one the singer-songwriter even tackled on “Tug of War” (a tune that went on to beat the likes of Nickelback to win the **2010 Canadian Radio Music Award** for Song of the Year). But “Curiosity” came rushing out differently, with pop and snap and a bubblegum chorus harder to shake than the bad-boy she’s crowing about.

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Carly didn’t know what to do about the new song. It felt so natural. She thought about it constantly—at home in Vancouver, while doing a promotional tour of Japan, and then back again. For eight months, she and Ryan wrestled with it. She wondered: “How would this fit on my record?”

Sure, she’s always spinning the likes of **La Roux**, **Kimbra** and **Dragonette** on her stereo, but this is a girl whose roots are in folk. As a little girl, her dad would sing her to sleep with **James Taylor** classics. As a fledgling musician she ran an acoustic night at a Vancouver cafe. Even during her 2007 run on *Canadian Idol* she was auditioning with her own material and covering Janis Ian. And then there were all the songs she’d promised herself she’d showcase on album No. 2—jangly and cozy folk-pop creations more Natalie Imbruglia than Kylie Minogue.

Those tunes are still there in force. Still, Carly decided that when it came to “Curiosity,” it was love. Pop had just as much a place on her record as folk. Ryan was just as “stoked” about the song as she was—and so, the real fun began.

The songs rushed out, a whole 35 of them written—with most of the record made at Ryan’s Wine Cellar Studios in Vancouver, then mixed by **Dave “Rave” Ogilvie** (David Bowie, Nine Inch Nails, Jakalope) at Mushroom Studios. And Carly’s friends and family were along for the whole process, the singer inviting them to listening sessions—baiting them with new tunes and fresh popcorn—so they could help her pick the sweetest of the bunch.

“**Talk to Me**” finds the 25-year-old getting her flirt on in a summer song clicking with handclaps. On the flip, “**Just a Step Away**” is, to Carly, the definition of a “beautiful old fashioned love song”—a piece she adapted from a tune her father wrote for her step-mom on their wedding day. (“He cried and loved it and it was so sweet,” she says.)

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“Both Sides Now,” Carly’s modern cover of the **Joni Mitchell** classic, bridges the styles she’s embraced on *Curiosity*. “It’s exactly the combination that I’m hoping is the theme of the album,” says the self-described “flower child of pop.” “I was definitely thinking Joni Mitchell meets dance,” she says of the album’s sonic palette with a giggle. “That’s exactly what I want this record to be.”

And then there’s lead single **“Call Me Maybe**,” the hit that pulses with the same jumpy energy as a new romance—the very thing Carly’s singing about. It’s a track that reunited Carly with her **“Sour Candy”** duet partner, old friend and tour-mate **Josh Ramsay** of **Marianas Trench**.

“He was so stoked. He’d been trying to get me on the pop train for years,” she laughs. Since debuting in September, the single has been picked up by radio stations across the country. It started out as one of “a gazillion” song ideas Carly and her long-time guitarist Tavish Crowe are always tinkering on, but when Josh turned up to add his writing and production magic, the piece was completely transformed. “I showed it to Josh and in no time he added crazy amounts of Josh genius to make it sound pop and I had no idea how he had done it.”

And “Call Me Maybe” shares something with every other song on *Curiosity*. Underneath the occasional wash of kick-drum and synth, these are all songs sung from the heart. “It’s just me on my guitar in my bedroom writing journal entries,” Carly says of her creative process. “Everything is true for me in this,” she explains. “You can’t sing about love if you haven’t felt it, and you can’t sing about hurt if you haven’t experienced that, too. It’s almost not fair to your audience.

“That’s probably why when I listen back to the record, it’s all about love and chaos and those fun messes,” she says. And what could be more curious than that?

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