

## CHRISTIAN BURGHARDT

**Christian Burghardt** possesses all the qualities a fan of an acoustic-based pop artist could want: a rich, soulful voice with loads of texture; heartfelt, deeply personal lyrics; bright, nimble guitar playing, and a relatable, amiable presence to deliver it all. Veteran writer-producer Dr. Luke saw this clearly when he signed Burghardt to his Sony Music imprint Kemosabe Records in partnership with RCA Records. Now the Portland, Oregon, native is releasing his debut single, "Safe Place To Land," an uplifting, anthemic song about letting someone know you'll always be there for them.

It was inspired by things falling apart in my former relationship when my music career began to happen and I was traveling a lot," Burghardt says. "Safe Place To Land' was basically my desperate attempt to say 'I'm always going to be the guy you can depend on when things go wrong.' I really wanted to be the rock in her life, that's where the emotion in the song stems from."

The remainder of the songs on Burghardt's debut EP **SAFE PLACE TO LAND**, which is available now, burn with similar intensity, bolstered by the music's urgent, driving sonics. "When She Cries" is about the helplessness a man experiences when the woman he loves is distraught, while "Only I Could Know" details the feeling of losing someone and watching them fall in love with someone else. "Spark" and "Autopilot" speak more to Burghardt's journey as an artist. "'Spark' is about setting a goal and appreciating the climb and hard work it takes to get where you're going," he says. "And 'Autopilot' is about going through the motions and not doing what you really want to do with your life. For me, it's about the moment when I decided that I was going to do music 100 percent. I thought, 'If I want to do this, I have to go for it all out.' It drives the entire song."

Burghardt has always been drawn to singing. "My mom's side of the family is Korean and it's a tradition at family get-togethers for my grandmother to call out to any of the kids, 'You, karaoke now,'" he says. "She'd want performances from all the kids, who were all brought up playing an instrument. I played saxophone for a while, but after I quit, I didn't have an instrument. My grandmother would say, "'Christian, you don't have an instrument. You sing,'" and she'd make me do karaoke in front of the whole family. That was my first experience singing for people."

When Burghardt was in eighth grade, he took up guitar, teaching himself to play (first song he learned: Green Day's "Time of Your Life") and practicing for hours. Writing his own songs came naturally from there. After Burghardt played an original song with a friend at his high school graduation, another student's father thought he had talent and offered to manage him. His parents, however, wanted him to go to college. Burghardt enrolled at Oregon State University where he pursued pre-med and played football. After sustaining a serious leg injury during practice, and without the right insurance to pay for it, he ended up spending a lot of time in his dorm room. "That's when the guitar really came back to me," he says. "It was a good way for me to vent the frustration I was feeling. I got really serious about music and recording demos."

For the next several years, Burghardt wrote like crazy, teaching himself how to produce his own tracks on Pro Tools and eventually recording 60-70 songs. He put together a band and played shows all around Portland. By this time, he had transferred to Portland State University so he could be closer to venues in the city and was still playing football. Then he injured his other leg, and "all the hopes I had for shopping my demos around went down the drain," he says. "I could barely stand or move without being in pain, and I couldn't drive or even take a bus anywhere."

Not long after Burghardt recovered, he received a call from Camus Celli (who also discovered Gavin DeGraw) who had discovered his music through a mutual contact. "I was on the verge of quitting," he says. "I didn't really see any hope in it. I felt like I needed to get a degree and a stable job instead of working part time and spreading myself thin." Christian was invited to fly down to L.A. to showcase for Dr Luke. The next day, Burghardt was offered a joint recording deal with RCA Records and Dr. Luke's Kemosabe Records. "It was so many years of work and goal-setting for myself finally coming to fruition," he says. "It was unbelievable."

Burghardt has been working on new music ever since, meeting up with songwriters and producers in Los Angeles, New York, and Nashville, including Gregg Wattenberg (Train, Phillip Phillips), Derek Fuhrmann (Phillip Phillips, O.A.R.), and up-and-comer Josh Grant. "I was constantly looking over Gregg's shoulder watching everything in the studio, because production is a big part of what I do and I wanted to learn as much as I can," says Burghardt, who produced the track "Only I Could Know" himself. He's also hitting the road for a summer tour with Gavin DeGraw and Matt Nathanson. "I'm excited for all of it," he says. "Releasing music and going out and performing it for people - that's what I've

been waiting for. I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie and I can't wait to see what happens."

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