

Breakin' up don't get any easier

But that doesn't stop songwriters from trying to get it right

MUSIC PREVIEW

TOM PHILLIPS
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Ironwood

MARY-LYNN McEWEN

You might say that putting out a solo album when you have a band like The Men of Constant Sorrow is like riding a donkey while Northern Dancer waits in the barn, but, like many things in Tom Phillips's life, his solo album was a bit of an accident. When musician-producer extraordinaire Kit Johnson's marriage went south, he moved into the Bankview apartment building where Phillips resides. The pair spent 10 months sitting around Phillips's living room playing acoustic versions of break up songs Phillips had written while in a "fasting cabin" in the wilderness. The results are the 13 songs on *High Flyer*. Hankies optional at extra cost.

The Breakup Gospel According to Tom Phillips

Best break up drink: Guinness with a sidecar of Scotch

Best break up album: *The Essential Willie Nelson*. It's the perfect breakup album — I listened to

it for two months once.

Best morning after a break up drink: Guinness — a morning after a break up and a hangover are the same thing.

Best morning after a break up record: Gordon Lightfoot's first album *Lightfoot*.

Best place to go after a break up: Henry's (King Henry VIII Pub on 8th Avenue — The Men of Constant Sorrow's regular Saturday gig).

Most requested song at Henry's: It's a tie — "The Dead Hooker Song" and "Ribbons And Bows."

Real title of "The Dead Hooker Song": "Water Street" (which is the 12th song on *High Flyer*).

Breaking up is like: Getting bucked off a horse.

What you drink when you're bucked off a horse: Dirt.

Worst thing you've ever done to cause a breakup: Which one? Lied!

If you could go back and give yourself dating advice for any of your relationships, what would it be? Don't lie!

Best reasons to break up: If you're fightin', if you're lyin' or if you're cheatin'. Another good reason to break up is if they don't like country music.

Best reasons to stay together: If you're not fightin', lyin' or cheatin'. Another good reason to stay together is if they like the same music that you do.



Flying high — Tom Phillips may be going solo, but his repertoire of break up songs proves he is still a man of constant sorrow

TOM PHILLIPS
High Flyer
Independent

• For Tom Phillips's solo CD release, musicians include Kit Johnson, John Hyde, Oscar Lopez and Charlie Veilleux.

Calgary singer-songwriter Tom Phillips believes that honesty is the most important thing when you're writing a song.

That honesty shines between the ribs of this perfectly spare acoustic album. The 13 songs capture the veracity of decades of heartache the way amber captures a mosquito, preserving the blood, love and regret that fuel a beating heart like a moment in time forever ready to be held up to the light.

The album is also a destination on Kit Johnson's 30-year journey as a musician and producer, for his contributions nurture the simple phrasing and coax performances so full of longing that the songs are easily mistaken for old standards rather than melodies born in the new millennium. Tunes for when the lying, fighting and cheating are all used up and you've moved your furniture but not your heart.



MARY-LYNN McEWEN