

[MusicReview](#) Tony Clayton-Lea Irish Times Oct 24, 2024

Christy Moore: A Terrible Beauty review – Hits the bull’s-eye again and again

There is no emotion that doesn’t get a nod in the singer-songwriter’s latest album



A Terrible Beauty: The album's name was inspired by a painting by Christy Moore's friend, artist Martin Gale

Artist:Christy Moore

Genre:Folk

Label:Claddagh Records

For the past 55 years [Christy Moore](#) has observed (not always from the sidelines) the nature of the human condition. For the most part he finds it lacking, which is why his songs and those of other songwriters that he chooses find dirt under the fingernails. You might even think of Moore as a kind of crime-scene investigator, highlighting wrongdoings for society's benefit.

A Terrible Beauty is not directly named after WB Yeats's poem Easter 1916; instead it's inspired by a painting by a friend, the artist [Martin Gale](#). ("A sinister atmosphere can be found lurking behind the beauty in his pictures," Moore writes in the liner notes.) But the meaning of the album's title is clear: there is no emotion that doesn't get a nod.



A Terrible Beauty: Christy Moore's album wrings truth out of both international disaster and domestic abuse. Photograph: Ellius Grace

The songs deliver a range of messages. From Sunflowers, a spoken-word track about the [war in Ukraine](#) by the Manchester songwriter Mike Harding ("She confronted soldiers on her street. Ignoring guns, grenades and gibbering headsets, she offered them a handful of sunflower seeds") to Black and Amber, a desperately sad song about alcoholism by the Dublin songwriter Brian Brannigan ("This song brings me back to a time in life when the pub was a central part of my life," Moore writes. "Thankfully the day came when I closed that door behind me, never to

return, one day at a time”), the album wrings truth out of both international disaster and domestic abuse.

Other highlights include Cumann na Mná (which references the comments of the Sky Sports News presenter Rob Wotton about the singing of the Wolfe Tones song Celtic Symphony at an Ireland women’s soccer match at Hampden Park in October 2022), Life and Soul (a gracious nod to [Ann Lovett](#)) and [Lyra McKee](#) (“In the right place at the wrong time”).

For all the living-legend and national-treasure plaudits, you might think A Terrible Beauty is just another dependable [Christy Moore](#) album. Not really. This one hits the bull’s-eye repeatedly and with force.

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