

Ben Sures returns to the Capital for two shows in October



Music fans are in for a treat next month when Roots Acoustic Canadian singer songwriter and guitarist Ben Sures returns to the Capital to play two gigs; one at the Edinburgh Folk Club where he will help celebrate the club's 40th anniversary and another at the Wee Folk Club at the Royal Oak.

Raised in Canada's 'Austin of the north' Winnipeg, Manitoba, Ben began playing guitar and writing songs at age 15, and although largely unnoticed by the mainstream music industry, Ben has massive stage presence and many devoted fans throughout the world with songs such as 'Used to have a Raygun,' 'Any Precious Girl,' 'My Last Girlfriend,' 'Drunk and in my Kitchen' and 'Who killed the last folk singer?' His acclaimed albums include 'Field Guide to Loneliness,' 'Gone to Bolivia,' 'Goodbye Pretty Girl,' 'No Absolutes' and recently released 'Son of Trouble.'

Ben still has many fond memories of his last visit to Edinburgh, and plans to do some exploring this time around, but is looking for advice from readers. He took time out from his busy schedule to speak to the Edinburgh Reporter ahead of his forthcoming tour, and explained what the audience can expect from his show.

"I am really looking forward to my return to Edinburgh; I love the people I met last time, hardy and robust and all that gorgeous red hair!! Also Paddy Bort who introduces the performers at both shows, is the most delightful emcee I have ever come across, so much so, I have video of him introducing

me, if I ever make a live record I hope it begins with his voice!

“I went to the Castle last time, so I would like to do some other exploring, maybe a hike outside the city. I will take any advice on what to see while in Edinburgh! Also can someone direct me to a good Indian Restaurant, Blues bar and funky neighbourhood and if someone could grant me an audience with Dick Gaughan I would be the happiest of tourists!

“I try to give context to my songs with a little storytelling and without realizing why people usually laugh at something I say. Edinburgh Fans can expect a mid-western Canadian accent, a good story to back up the songs and a sing a long of some kind. The Edinburgh folk club is a warm up spot and is usually quite short, so I will likely defer to Paddy Bort’s requests if he has any. I know he is a very big fan of the song ‘The Boy Who walked backward through the snow’ which is a true story about a native kid (First Nations/Aboriginal) who didn’t want to return to residential school after the Christmas break and walked backwards from his house into the forest and waited there silently. When the Nuns or Mounties, whoever it was that came to collect him all they found were tracks coming out of the forest, so they never looked behind the tree line and he was able to avoid a return to the terrible school. As an aside he grew up to be a fiddler, a Chief in his community and he retained his Ojibway language.

“I will probably include sing a long, as for my set at the Wee Folk Club in The Royal Oak people can expect to hear an overview of my seven albums. I usually play the songs Rambling Bones and Any Precious Girl the latter having won first prize in the John Lennon Song writing competition’s Folk Category and the other song was finalist in the International Song writing contest and the USA Song writing Competition. I also have a song called ‘Used to Have a Raygun’ which is a bit of an anthem for socially awkward people across the globe. This song was culled from a two and a half page letter written by a

woman who invented the all-powerful sci fi weapon in her imagination which she used to correct situations that didn't go her way, she dialled up whatever appropriate setting was required, for example 'Make time reverse and have that conversation go a lot more smoothly with that good looking boy' setting. She would dial it up, shoot into the air and BAM time would reverse and the words would flow like honey from her tongue and the boy would be conquered! There was also a setting that made mean people dumb, instant affection setting, anything she could dream of.

Ben's new CD Son of Trouble which is a nod to blues packed with raw guitar riffs, and includes songs in French and Spanish has just been released, and he has pledged to play at least a couple of tracks from it, along with some old favourites.



He continued: "I will mostly play an overview of my folkie songs but definitely a couple from the new album. I find certain songs work best in situations where I am performing solo and those will be the ones I pull out, usually with the most interaction (sing along) or those that have the most tangible story line, also I am typically funnier when am without a band.

"I wouldn't say I have a favourite song on 'Son of Trouble' but as a whole one of my goals was to not over arrange or over think the songs so that they would come out sounding natural and in some cases quite raw. The album was the first time I really shared my guitar playing skills and the first time I sang in Spanish and French, as well as the first time I performed and wrote original songs closer to the Blues vein. SO I guess it's an album of firsts, what I have discovered with most of my fans is that it's not as much a departure for them as it is for me because although it is stylistically different and there is more vintage electric guitar than

previous records it's still the same voice and songwriter, and I take great pride in that. I would rather be identified as Ben Sures rather than 'Folkie Ben Sures' or 'Blues Guy Ben Sures' etc."

Before he visits the Capital however, Ben is hoping to finally complete a project that has taken him many years. He explained: "I am writing a song about the Librarians and the library from my childhood. Going to the library every Saturday to read books and experience story times and just being in this amazing place designed for children and being madly in love (at age 8 and younger) with my librarian. 'My librarian wore perfume, hoop earrings and thick eyelashes. I couldn't wait for Saturdays, story time and her funky glasses'

Finally what message would Ben give to those who have never had the pleasure of listening to his music?

"If you enjoy the things that make ordinary people extraordinary, storytelling, a performer who acts like he is having a conversation with you and some pretty good guitar playing I think you would be able to take something away from the show that will stay with you."

Wed 9 October, 40th Anniversary of the Edinburgh Folk Club, Pleasance Cabaret Bar. 8pm Tickets £9 door/£8 conc. /£6 members

Sun 20 October, The Wee Folk Club, Royal Oak, 1 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh. 8.30pm Tickets £5

Photograph by Roth and Ramberg.