

Bella Hardy to appear at the Brunton in Musselburgh



Multi award winning singer and songwriter Bella Hardy will be appearing at the Brunton in Musselburgh on 9 April.

2015 was a breathless year for Bella which saw the release of her seventh solo album, 'With The Dawn', to great critical acclaim. A summer of opening appearances across the UK and Ireland for Grammy Award winning Mary Chapin Carpenter was topped off by a main stage performance at the prestigious Cambridge Folk Festival and from there followed a fantastic headlining tour in the autumn.

Now she heads out in the spring of 2016 for a selection of special, scaled back performances across the UK. Performing as a trio with regular stage companions Anna Massie (Blazin' Fiddles) and Tom Gibbs, this is a rare opportunity to hear Bella's stunning compositions in the more intimate setting.

'With the Dawn' is Bella's seventh solo album, (her first since being named BBC Radio 2 Folk Singer Of The Year in 2014-) and isn't just the latest collection of songs from this prolific and ingenious artist. The album is an account of one year of her life. Where previously Bella has adapted and explored traditional ballads and fables to tell her contemporary folk tales, the stories that inspired these songs are her own experiences: good and bad, happy or sad.

'With the Dawn' is more intimate and reflective music than before. The arrangements are more instinctive, more reactive, as befits the mind-set that informed the lyrics. Vivid brass gives way to lonesome piano; choral voices peal; banjos emerge out of beats and blips. Elements of the initial demos, sometimes recorded into a phone as the thoughts occurred, have

been kept. Whatever instrument was nearest to hand was grabbed and deployed whenever and wherever (even on one occasion in the bath) giving 'With the Dawn' its striking immediacy.

Touring with her new With The Dawn Band, Bella is joined by regular stage companion Anna Massie (Blazin' Fiddles), the album's producer Ben Seal (Urban Farm Hand), Tim Lane (The Hidden Orchestra) and Tom Gibbs, in a powerful and evocative collaboration of voice and fiddle, banjo and guitar, piano and keys, electronics and drums.

These are songs written on the road, full of that sense of displacement, longing and contemplation that all itinerant musicians know. This was a time for a turning-30 Bella where nothing was stable. Documenting that flux was a way to make sense of it all. Performing 'With the Dawn' Bella's soaring kite-like voice is married to lyrics that poetically question everything she's seen and done up till now; letting go of expectations, both other people's and her own. But with closing lullaby *And We Begin* there's a light at the end... or rather the beginning.

Bella grew up in Edale in the Peak District but now lives in Edinburgh. Although the Hardy family sang in the local choir, it was a combination of her childhood love for ballad books and visits to local folk festivals that decided her future. At 13 she began performing at Cambridge and Sidmouth festivals and in 2004 reached the final of the BBC Young Folk Award, having taught herself to fiddle sing. Following a BA in English Literature and a Masters degree in Music, Bella released her debut album *Night Visiting* in 2007. One of its songs, *Three Black Feathers* was nominated for a BBC Folk Award. It was her first original composition.

Since then Bella has continued to record and perform at a tremendous rate; appearing on numerous BBC radio and TV programmes, singing solo in a sold-out Albert Hall at the Proms, composing the music for a Radio 4 documentary on the

Post Office, writing with former Beautiful South founder David Rotheray, forming an all-female fiddle group with folk royalty Eliza Carthy, and winning yet another Radio 2 Folk Award for her original song *The Herring Girl*. Her 2013 album *battleplan*, a collection of reimagined traditional songs, received the best reviews of her career, with multiple stars showered on it from the broadsheets and folk press alike.

DATES

24-Mar The Tolbooth Stirling

25-Mar The Black Abbot – Montrose Folk Club

26-Mar Eastgate Arts Centre Peebles

30-Mar The North Wall Oxford

31-Mar The Forge at The Anvil Basingstoke

1-Apr Cornerstone Arts Centre Didcot

2-Apr The Junction Cambridge

3-Apr Salisbury Arts Centre Salisbury

6-Apr The Convent Stroud

7-Apr The Greystones Sheffield

8-Apr The Grand Clitheroe

9-Apr The Brunton Musselburgh

For Tickets <http://www.musicglue.com/bellahardy/>

Photo courtesy of Alex Boyd