

1st March 2018
PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

First artists announced at English Folk Expo 18 – 21 October 2018

To celebrate St David's Day, we're really excited to be able to announce the four artists who will be showcasing at English Folk Expo (EFEx) and Manchester Folk Festival from our 2018 international partner, Wales!

Welsh International Partnership

Each year at EFEx, we have a special focus on another country or territory. This year, with the support of Arts Council of Wales, we are delighted to present four of the finest Welsh artists alongside around forty English artists showcasing at the event.

Wales as our international partner is presented by a partnership between Wales Arts International, trac and Theatr Mwldan under the brand of Cerdd Cymru:Music Wales and funded by Arts Council of Wales.

9bach

The ten songs on 9bach's latest album Tincian (nine of which are Lisa Jên's own compositions) though written and sung in Welsh/Cymraeg and arranged in the folk tradition, also tap into elements of dub and rock, taking an unconventional and universal approach to form, reflecting 9Bach's view of themselves as internationalists. They want to take the experience and the culture of North Wales out to a wider audience, citing Super Furry Animals' highly successful *Mwng* album as an inspiration. The result is an atmospheric, evocative and emotional hybrid of the folk tradition and contemporary influences. Building on a deepened, almost ambient sound-picture, the songs take you into the landscape and the emotions that it evokes.

"9Bach's music is ripped through with transcendence; a brooding melancholy as much as a gossamer dreaminess." - Line Of Best Fit

<http://www.9bach.com/>

[Images [here](#)]

Alaw

ALAW are three leading musicians who bring a wealth of experience to a shared passion – the traditional music of Wales. Whether unearthing rare gems or reimagining a well-loved melody, they treat their music with a deftness and sensitivity that is thoroughly absorbing. Combined with powerful song writing and original tunes, this makes for a musical experience that will stay with the listener long after the concert has ended. Oli Wilson-Dickson, Jamie Smith and Dylan Fowler have a long history of working together, sharing projects such as The Devil's Violin, Szapora and The Ian McMillan Orchestra. Oli and Jamie are well known throughout the folk world as the frontline of

Jamie Smith's Mabon. From stirring songs to driving jigs – they communicate their music with relaxed humour and a genuine affection that is truly infectious.

“Truly remarkable! Magical...” “A force to be reckoned with!” - Frank Hennessey, BBC Radio Wales
<http://www.alaw-band.com/>
[Images in dropbox [here](#)]

Catrin Finch & Seckou Keita

This sublime, critically acclaimed and multi award-winning collaboration between two adventurous virtuoso musicians - Welsh harpist Catrin Finch and Senegalese kora player Seckou Keita - delivers a stunning exhibition of world-class musicianship. Drawing deep on their own diverse traditions and transforming them with remarkable synergy, Catrin and Seckou have built a formidable reputation for extraordinary performances. Following the huge success of their debut release *Clychau Dibon* back in 2013, their long-awaited second album 'SOAR' launches in April 2018. The album takes flight on the wings of the osprey, the magnificent bird of prey recently returned to Wales after centuries of absence, which makes its annual 3,000-mile migration from the coasts of West Africa to the estuaries of Wales, soaring like music and dreams over man-made borders, on an innate and epic journey of endurance.

“intricate, ethereal and entrancing, an elaborate pas-de-deux... remarkable” - Neil Spencer, UNCUT Magazine ★★★★★
<https://www.catrinfinchandseckoukeita.com/>
[Images in dropbox [here](#)]

Gwyneth Glyn

Although her feet are rooted deep in the earth of Eifionydd, Gwyneth's gaze is always drawn to distant horizons. A poet, singer and playwright, she sees herself as an artist-adventurer who thrives on experimenting with different forms. In her latest collection of songs, *Tro*, Gwyneth encompasses all her recent influences and experiences. It is a collection that traces the journey back to her roots – from Cardiff, where she lived for five years, back to her native environment in Eifionydd, north Wales; the heart's journey back from darkness to light, and the soul's journey from a distant, foreign desert to the fruitful greenness of the very place where it belongs.

“Her lyrics have a simplicity of language and imagery: there's a poet here who is able to leave words and images hanging in the memory.... She has a fine feel for the art of songwriting as well as the wind, trees and landscape of Wales that inform her music and emotions.” – Frazer Cains, LWCLL
<http://gwynethglyn.com/>
[Images in dropbox [here](#)]

Manchester Folk Festival first 2018 artists announced

Alongside these four artists, we're pleased to also announce the first confirmed English performers at Manchester Folk Festival.

Billy Bragg

Governments rise and fall, fashions come and go, pop stars are built up and knocked down by a fickle media, and Billy Bragg adapts to survive. His enemies remain essentially the same: craven politicians, inhumane corporations, plus assorted racists, fascists, bullies, reactionaries and people with floppy fringes. Orator, entertainer, rabble-rouser, negotiator, pamphleteer, the fabled 'big-nosed bard from

Barking', Billy Bragg is many things. A regular contributor to the national debate as TV pundit and newspaper columnist, he continues to sharpen his pen as a writer, and his first book, the considered, wide-ranging treatise on English identity *The Progressive Patriot*, opened up a whole new vista of possibility for a man who never stops engaging with all the trouble in the world. Whether it's unionized workers, constitutional reform, bankers' bonuses, illegal wars or the undemocratic commandeering of a portable toilet backstage at a festival, Billy Bragg will help fight your corner.

<http://billybragg.co.uk>

[Images in dropbox [here](#)]

Coven

Coven is the collective of three of the British folk scene's finest, most formidable and forthright female acts; the exquisitely harmonic songwriting duo and BBC 6 Music favourites O'Hooley & Tidow, the enchanting BBC Radio 2 Folk Award Finalists Lady Maisery and the irrepressible Leicester songwriter, activist and performer Grace Petrie. In 2014, Belinda O'Hooley, Heidi Tidow, Rowan Rheingans, Hannah James, Hazel Askew and Grace Petrie got together to celebrate International Women's Day in March with a series of three concerts. Since then, the tour has extended year on year with 2017 seeing them release 'Unholy Choir'; an EP of the songs that the group has collaborated on. Experience these thought provoking, heartfelt, entertaining and enthralling women performing individually and collectively on one stage.

<https://www.facebook.com/COVENMUSIC/>

[Images on dropbox [here](#)]

The Wilsons

The glorious, powerful, vocal harmony of The Wilson Family of Billingham, Teesside has rung out in folk clubs and festivals continuously for the last 40+ years. The brothers sing traditional and traditionally-orientated songs, with deep understanding, joy and good humour. Their admirers are many, both in the UK and overseas, as they continue to impress with their dynamic live performances. Their versatility is dramatically evident by their collaborations with the Royal Northern Sinfonia Orchestra, Kathryn Tickell Band and the BBC Singers, during their performance at The Royal Albert Hall, in August 2011, which received universal plaudits from arts critics in the national press.

<http://www.thewilsonfamilyalbum.co.uk/>

[Image [here](#)]

Shiny new video

We've made a shiny new promo video. We hope it gives a good flavour of what English Folk Expo is, why it exists and what to expect from the event in 2018.

<https://vimeo.com/254521785>

Thanks to Ben Jacobson for all his hard work in pulling this together.

About EFEx

English Folk Expo is the annual industry showcase for English folk, roots and acoustic music open to UK and international music promoters and programmers interested in booking English music for their festivals, venues and events, and selected industry. It takes place 18 – 21st October, the weekend before WOMEX, in Central Manchester in partnership with Manchester Folk Festival and showcases around forty emerging, mid-range and headline artists in venues of capacities 100-1,000.

Contacts and questions: tom@englishfolkexpo.com

EFEx Website: www.englishfolkexpo.com



MWLDAN



HOME

So it is.



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND