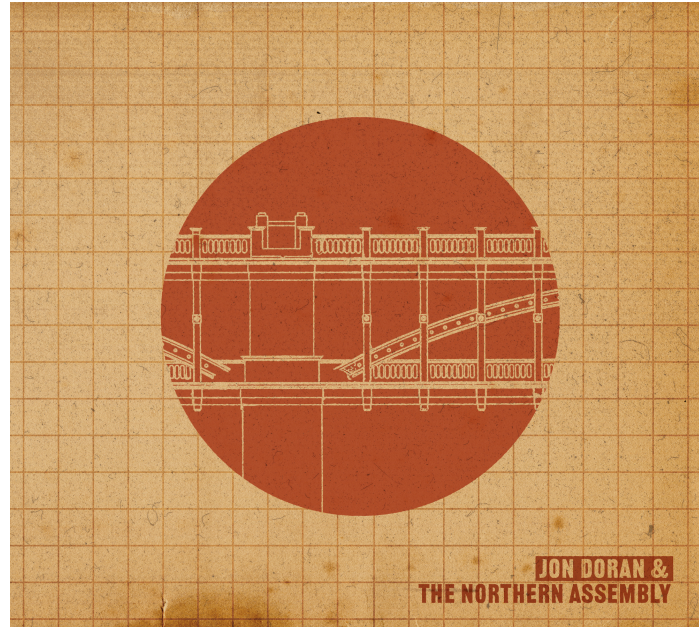


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JON DORAN & THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY

Self-titled debut EP out 27 September



Jon Doran & The Northern Assembly is a groundbreaking new collaboration that seeks to capture the excitement that lies within traditional song. The trio aims to breathe new life into old stories from across the British Isles, injecting the energy they feel these narratives deserve. After starting out playing at festivals, the trio played their debut headline tour earlier this year, before taking their first steps into the recording studio. Their much-anticipated eponymous debut EP will be released on **Friday 27th September**.

Consciously moving away from the conventional folk song performance style, Jon Doran & The Northern Assembly rely upon their varied musical upbringings and experiences to conjure emotions and communicate a story far deeper than the words of the song. With striking vocals from **Jon Doran** (BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award Finalist 2019) combined with the virtuosic playing of **Heather Ferrier** (Balter) on accordion and **Jordan Aikin** (Pons Aelius) on whistle and pipes, Jon Doran & The Northern Assembly take audiences on a journey that explores the full spectrum of human experience.

The trio aims to blur the lines between two contrasting sides of the folk genre - the bright, vibrant energy of contemporary instrumental folk music, and the intensity of traditional storytelling songs. Their strengths lie in Jon Doran's powerful vocal delivery and Heather and Jordan's driving accompaniment. Heather Ferrier ("Accordion Virtuoso" – Tom Robinson) lends her expertise in the alt-folk scene, drawing from jazz and pop influenced chord

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progressions and rhythms, whilst Jordan Aikin lends his experience of working in big bands to fill out the sound. On guitar and Irish bouzouki, frontman Jon Doran delivers breathtaking stories from our past with power and sincerity. The trio are also joined on the EP by **Bevan Morris** (Grace Smith Trio, Pons Aelius) on electric bass and double bass, **Adam Stapleford** (Ponyland, Yes! Grasshopper) on drums, and **Janice Burns** (Janice Burns & Jon Doran, RE:Vulva) on backing vocals.

Unsurprisingly for the folk genre, the EP draws deeply on age-old stories of love and heartache, conflict and struggle. From the tale of Robin Hood and the Pedlar, to the historic legend of Bold Wolfe and the Battle of Quebec, it's a treasure trove of human stories from years gone by. What's more unusual, however, is the trio's vibrant and energised approach, which promises to bring these stories to a whole new audience.

The EP was recorded over 6 days in January 2024 at The Studio at Sunbeams, on the edge of the Lake District. It was recorded and produced by Pete Ord, whose insight and experience of working with both traditional singers and instrumentalists was invaluable in shaping the finished sound. The EP was mastered by Sam Proctor at Lismore Mastering, who is renowned internationally for his work across many genres as a musician and engineer.

Speaking about the release, Jon Doran says, "This EP has been in the pipeline for quite a while, and I'm delighted to finally be able to share it with the world. Working with such a talented and creative group of people has not only shaped the direction of the EP, but also our approach to music-making going forward. We're really excited to see where the project goes from here, so watch this space!"

Jon Doran & The Northern Assembly will be released on **27th September 2024**. It's available to pre-order at jondoran.bandcamp.com.

Track notes

1. *Robin Hood and the Pedlar*

This is a popular story in British folklore, and variations on this melody can be found far and wide. The song tells the story of Robin Hood's chance encounter with his cousin, the Bold Pedlar. It's a fast-paced ballad that doesn't let details get in the way of a good story! This version is probably closest to Mervyn Plunkett's recording of George Tompsett in 1960. Jordan took this song into a completely different place by borrowing rhythms and phrasing from funk bands. The instrumentals demonstrate the power of the highland pipes, and the whole arrangement is pinned down perfectly by Adam Stapleford on drums.

2. *Bold Wolfe*

Hailing from Newfoundland, this song recounts events that unfolded at the Battle of Quebec - a conflict so important that it completely altered the fate of Canada. It's a song that transports

the listener onto the battlefield. An army of about 4,000 British troops, led by General James Wolfe, ascended the Heights of Abraham and defeated the French led by Louis-Joseph de Montcalm in 1759. The tragedy of Wolfe's death partly overshadowed the British victory, but secured his place in stories like this.

3. *The Evening Sun - Introduction*

The Evening Sun is preceded by an introductory soundscape that sets the scene. The intensity of the melody rises and falls as the musicians play off each other, varying the dynamics and density to replicate the calming but powerful nature of a flowing river.

4. *The Evening Sun*

Jon first heard this song from a recording of Cas Wallin on the Digital Library of Appalachia, and then later discovered that it originated as an old blues song by W. C. Handy. The words come from the great blues musician and composer, Memphis Minnie, who provided some heartbreaking verses to play with, and Jon then added his own chorus. Jordan composed a slow march to conclude the piece, intended to convey the inevitable passing of time and the beauty that comes from it.

The heartbreaking nature of this piece transforms the listener to a quiet, thoughtful place. It was recorded in the perfect time and setting, as the band watched the sun set over the snow-capped fells. The tranquil space created by this song provides a contrast to the intensity of the rest of the EP.

5. *Kitty of Ballinamore*

Kitty of Ballinamore is an age-old story of betrayal and false love. This version of the song comes from a 1978 recording of County Tyrone traditional singer, Geordie Hanna. Jon drew from Geordie's delivery of the song when it came to recording this version, and it remains largely unchanged, with the exception of an alteration to the final verse. Hanna's protagonist concluded by blaming all 'female kind' for his downfall - the band felt that this didn't paint him in the best light, and have given the story their own twist.

6. *Heenan and Sayers*

The words of this song come straight from the pages of broadside ballads covering the real life event in 1860. John Heenan and Tom Sayers were considered the best boxers America and the UK had to offer, back when pugilism was illegal. Hundreds gathered in a field just outside Farnborough in 1860 to watch this fight, including notable characters such as Charles Dickens and the Prince of Wales. It resulted in the founding of modern boxing as a sport. The arrangement of the song showcases each band member's individual style, whilst conveying the intensity that made the events of the song so unforgettable.

Release details

Jon Doran - Voice, Irish bouzouki, guitar, violin

Heather Ferrier - Accordion

Jordan Aikin - Whistle, pipes

Bevan Morris - Double bass, electric bass

Adam Stapleford - Percussion

Janice Burns - Voice (on track 4)

Self-released - Catalogue number JDNA001

Produced and recorded by Pete Ord at The Studio at Sunbeams

Mastered by Sam Proctor at Lismore Mastering

Album artwork by Jon Doran

Band photos by Megan Savage

Useful links

Website: www.jondoranmusic.co.uk

Bandcamp: jondoran.bandcamp.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@JonDoran

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JonDoranMusic

Instagram: www.instagram.com/jondoranmusic

Find out more

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