

## MARYEN CAIRNS - BIO

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For over 30 years, singer-songwriter Maryen Cairns's allegorical folk-pop has offered a form of literate escapism for her worldwide fanbase. "I feel driven to create songs that people can disappear into. I want to pluck them away from reality so that they can lose themselves for a few minutes," says the Guernsey-based artist.

In turn, her singular musicality has taken Maryen on a fantastical journey of a music career. This has included releasing 7 critically-acclaimed solo albums; being produced and mentored by Rolling Stone's producer Chris Kimsey; a long professional association with former Marillion lead singer Fish; and many other adventures.

Today, the restless creative shows no signs of slowing down. She will be issuing a newly-recorded series of live albums that reimagine her classic recordings, beginning with *One Woman Band, Live at Echotown Studios, Vol 1* which will be Maryen's first vinyl release.

Maryen is a solo artist, a multi-instrumentalist, a producer, and a storytelling songwriter with a flair for compelling narrative arcs, character development, and transporting imagery. Her work is both delicate and powerful, featuring her folksy guitar accompaniment, her crystalline piano playing, and her stunning vocals replete with a unique intonation and invigorating register swings.

Maryen was born in Scotland, emigrated to Sydney, and began writing songs when she was only 13. She came up performing in London where she was also an early adopter of home studio recording. In the 1980s through the 1990s, Maryen worked through the Tascam 4-track, ZX Spectrum, Atari Pro 24, and Cubase.

She would go onto have a fascinatingly varied career over many decades. Her 2012 album, *Stories From The Red Tent*, featuring the song, "Homebirth," was paired with a groundbreaking video synced up with birthing images that to date has been viewed 56,000 times on YouTube. Maryen presented her 2016 album, *Femina Australis*, a concept album tracing the lives and contributions of twelve significant Australian women, as a stories and songs concert series with backing by her family band.

Maryen has also had an expanded role in the music biz. She's a pioneering festival producer who founded, and for 10 years ran, The Mfest - Celebration of Motherhood and the Creativity of Women in Springbrook Mountain, Gold Coast, Queensland. She instigated and hosted Sydney's first originals-only open mic night. She's known for her backup vocal work with ex-Marillion vocalist Fish. And Maryen once played a grand

piano in the crater of an extinct volcano in the Canary Islands for an international promotional video for Bose and Phillips CDi.

Her latest era of creativity has been inspired by a 10-date, one-woman-show tour of the UK that took place in August of 2023. The concept initially blossomed from Maryen's desire to connect with her audience during the pandemic. The story goes Maryen started a couple of initiatives during lockdown, including The Cairns Club, a series of emails with stories and pictures from Maryen's musical life, and a popular livestream series. For these special streaming shows, fans wanted her to perform intimate, stripped down renditions of her classic repertoire, and Maryen began to experiment. "I am a believer that good songs can shine, presented just with voice, and simple accompaniment," Maryen says.

Right after the final date of her one woman tour, Maryen went into a nearby studio for two days with producer Chris Kimsey. There, in front of a small audience, Maryen performed 30 songs from her back catalog. Often, Maryen would sit on a cajón and pivot between a guitar and piano, and perform impressive one-woman band feats. Nine songs from these sessions have been cherry-picked for *One Woman Band, Live at Echotown Studios, Vol 1*.

The album opens with an impassioned "Kids From The Burbs," a song from Maryen's second album, 2004's *Stories From Beneath*, which spotlights her dynamically emotive vocals. She strips down "Give To The Chase," a song from her fourth album, 2012's *Stories From The Red Tent*, to voice and percussion, mining a performance that's both primal and beautiful. On "The Smuggler's Tale," from 2022's *Anew*, Maryen deftly showcases her multi-instrumental chops, shifting effortlessly between piano and guitar while keeping a steady bass drum pulse throughout. The track, "Missing You," is an unreleased song presented here as a mesmerizing acoustic ballad, boasting sumptuous fingerpicking through gorgeous chord changes.

This intimate music making has been the direct result of a self-growth evolution for Maryen which will continue to shape her artistic continuum. "When I was younger, people knew me deeply through my music, but I wasn't as open to connecting as I am today," she says. "The connection I now have with my audience has breathed new life into my music."

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