

SHARRON KRAUS

Sharron Kraus is a singer, musician and songwriter who both defiantly recasts and tenderly cherishes the folk traditions of England and Appalachia. Her songs tell intricate tales of rootless souls, dark secrets and earthy joys, the lyrics plucked as sonorously as her acoustic guitar.

In 2002, Sharron released her debut *Beautiful Twisted* on the independent Camera Obscura label. The gnarled branches on the album's cover reflected the music; Kraus' disturbing songs were a shadowy wood to ensnare the listener. *Beautiful Twisted* was a concentration of her influences at that point, representing her traditional folk interest and her co-existing love of cerebral gothic music like Nick Cave and the Violent Femmes. Sounding both phenomenally original and effortlessly contemporary, the album instantly attracted attention, and was named by *Rolling Stone* in their Critics' Top Albums of 2002.

Following 2003's winter concept album *Yuletide* with American psych-folk pioneers The Iditarod, Sharron released her second solo album *Songs Of Love And Loss* in 2004. The third album, *The Fox's Wedding*, was even denser in its imagery, drawing from the natural world, literature and Sharron's personal experience; it soared between swooping panoramas and pared down, waspish delicacy. The album was released on Durtro in 2008, the imprint founded by Current 93's David Tibet.

Collaborations have always been important to Sharron. She has performed with Irish free-folk collective United Bible Studies and alongside Trembling Bells' Alex Neilson. Sharron has also embarked on recorded partnerships with Californian troubadour Christian Kiefer on 2006's *The Black Dove*; Espers' Meg Baird and Helena Espvall on the traditional album *Leaves From Off The Tree* that same year; and gathered an ensemble cast of folk singers on *Right Wantonly A-Mumming* in 2007 for a collection of seasonal songs. Sharron is a member of Tau Emerald, a duo with Tara Burke (better known as Fursaxa) and Rusalnaia, a partnership with Ex-Reverie's Gillian Chadwick.

Sharron has just finished recording material for her new album (working title *The Woody Nightshade*). This body of work is her finest and most ambitious to date. The songs undulate through delicate rhythmic heartbeats, understated folk sculptures and a shattering lyrical intensity. Claustrophobia permeates the tracks, brought on by Sharron's wraithlike vocals and the glistening, taut acoustics, but there are also shining moments of serenity to ease the foreboding tension. The songs are mercury for the soul; the modern, yet timeless, wind-whipped myths will mark Sharron Kraus out as one of the most original and innovative artists in the UK today.

Sharron has appeared in *The Wire*, *The Sound Projector*, *Dirty Linen*, *New Folk Sounds*, *Arthur Magazine*, *Ptolemaic Terrascope*, *Broken Face*, *Staple Magazine* and is featured in the forthcoming book *Seasons They Change: The Story of Acid, Psych and Experimental Folk*. She has been interviewed on BBC Radio 3 for 'A Place Called England' discussing the future of English folk music and recorded sessions for BBC Radio Scotland, Freakzone on Radio 6, and independent radio stations across the US.