

The Magpies - *Tidings* - Released 5th June 2020

It has only been a year since The Magpies burst onto the UK folk scene in the summer of 2019, but in that short space of time they have already made a huge impression with their fresh brand of transatlantic neo-folk. Described as ‘making waves wherever they play’ (Phil Beer, Show of Hands), The Magpies are releasing their debut album – *Tidings* – this summer.

Four accomplished musicians in their own right, The Magpies is a combination far greater than the sum of its parts. The beginnings of the project were kindled when award winning singer-songwriter Bella Gaffney met mandolin virtuoso Polly Bolton in 2017. The pair began performing as a duo, garnering a formidable reputation for their glittering live set and onstage rapport. Soon the line-up had expanded to include acclaimed fiddle player Holly Brandon and Sarah Smout on cello, and in early 2019 ‘The Magpies’ emerged fully fledged – a female four-piece with a sound and an energy unlike anything else on the contemporary folk scene. Having played at top-tier festivals such as Glastonbury, Cambridge Folk Festival and Shambala, The Magpies have quickly gained a dedicated following who are now eagerly awaiting their debut album.

Tidings is a rich and varied showcase of the music this band has been performing to rapt audiences at sold-out shows and festivals over the past year. Whilst the album draws on a range of influences from the world of traditional British folk and Americana, it delivers a sound that can only be described as contemporary. Rich and powerful lead vocals from Bella & Polly and a huge range of exquisite instrumentation from all four members on mandolin, guitar, fiddle, cello, bouzouki and banjo provide a thrilling canvas on which they paint their stories.

The album is full of songs which explore uniquely female experiences in unpredictable and surprising ways. From the transformation and sorcery of the traditional ballad *The Two Magicians*, to lost love, murder and suicide in the original *Run River Run*, The Magpies bring a fresh voice to the current milieu. As well as drawing on their experiences as women, the material is also deeply rooted in the traditions of their native Yorkshire. *Golden Girl* tells a tale of a daughter and her demented mother as they deal with isolation, grief and madness in the bleak and beautiful landscape of the Yorkshire Dales during the lead mining boom in the 19th Century.

Tidings is anything but predictable. Far from what you might expect from a polite, all-female folk band, The Magpies have created a sound that is bold and hard-edged. Littered with blistering instrumentals, the album transports the listener from the mists of the Celtic fringe, to the mountain trails of the Appalachians, before immersing us in a world of Balkan rhythm. Recorded by Dave Boothroyd at GDB Studios in York and mixed by Donald Richard (The East Pointers, The Trials of Cato) in Prince Edward Island, Canada, *Tidings* showcases production values rarely heard in the folk world. Mastered by Jon Astley (Fairport Convention, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones), the album is sleek, glossy and cutting edge.

“When everyone brings something to the party, it really sparks. The Magpies are some party.”

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Tidings will be released by Magpies Music Ltd on the 5th June 2020.