Erland & The Carnival

*Closing Time*

The new album released **25/08/2014** on **Full Time Hobby**

When unassuming young Orkney music-maker Erland Cooper picked up his guitar and travelled the length of the country to play a show in London’s Notting Hill, little did he know that a chance encounter with musical veteran Simon Tong (The Verve, The Good The Bad & The Queen, and Gorillaz) would be the start of a unique songwriting friendship. Together they formed Erland & The Carnival and now, nearly a decade later, arrives *Closing Time* - the band’s third, most accomplished album yet.

*“Closing Time doesn’t mark the beginning of the end; rather it marks an end to permit a new beginning,”* explains Erland. *“When Summer dies it’s to let winter in, then spring opens it up again; it has to happen. It’s enjoyable when you accept that you have a limited time to make things happen to the best of your ability.”*

Opening a new chapter, *Closing Time* is an understated, inward looking collection of songs that feature stunning string arrangements and Erland’s impassioned vocals at centre stage. But rather than the modern folk adaptations of traditional songs, children’s poems, and ancient literature on the band’s earlier albums or the pair’s recent conceptual folklore project The Magnetic North, this time the band tell tales of a more personal nature. “*Previously we didn’t know what we wanted to say or how to say it and would use stories and direct references to help us get to a place we could feel secure,”* admits Simon. Erland adds; *“in making this record we discarded an album’s worth of material that sounded like the first two albums. We wanted to make something different – doing another Jackson C Frank cover wasn’t an option.”*

Originally bonding over Jackson C Frank’s song ‘My Name is Carnival’ after his show all those years ago, Erland was first approached by Simon with a view to recording for his Butterfly folk label. The next day they were recording Frank’s song in the studio together and by the end of the session a band had formed. “*It’s hard to find people who you instantly click with and Erland was one of those people”* tells Simon. *“He’s very driven and will get out of bed in the morning which is half the battle sometimes.”*

Above all, *Closing Time* is the very first time the listener can truly hear the wholly collaborative process that is Erland & The Carnival. Lyrical and musical duties have always been shared, yet here the combined creativity of the pair’s working friendship is only solidified with Erland taking a more ‘hands on’ approach to production. The string arrangements, brought about by the album’s unashamed twisted and selfish love song ‘Quiet Love’, were scored by Simon before being recorded by a quartet in his living room later that week.

*“We have an ‘open’ relationship. We’re both free to pursue other musical relationships and do - but then we always drift back to working with each other eventually,”* explains Simon. “*Over the years we’ve developed a very intuitive way of making music together which is really free, exciting and rewarding. To quote Woody Allen: ‘a guy walks into a psychiatrist's office and says, hey doc, my brother's crazy! He thinks he's a chicken. The doc replies, why don't you turn him in? Then the guy says, I would but I need the eggs.’ We need the eggs!”*

Album track ‘I Am Joan’ sums up their rapport by referencing Simon’s nickname for Erland, Joan of Arc; *“It’s a light-hearted play on how Erland carries troubles on his back and would rather burn at the stake than give in,”* teases Simon. Elsewhere a wall of guitars with pounding John Cale-esque piano and Joy Division Arp keyboards, really drives ‘Birth Of A Nation’ whilst the beautifully simplistic ‘Daughter’ was writtenand recorded after Erland became a father for the first time - and half a bottle of whiskey. “*I was trying to write and record the simplest song that can say a number of deeper things while saying something completely obvious,”*says Erland. “*It’s more about hopeful reassurance than departure. To be honest, that pretty much sums up the entire record to me,”*

Recorded in Damon Albarn’s studio13 with previous Erland & The Carnival engineer Steve Sedgewick and mixed by London Grammar producer Tim Bran with Paul Weller guesting on two tracks. Despite creating more than 40 songs in the process of writing the album (“*Some of the song melodies and ideas on this may have even been written when I was 21 to be honest. ‘Hopeless’ certainly was,”* admits Erland), it was a brilliantly spontaneous and productive time taking just over 3 days to come to fruition. “*We learnt to be incredibly disciplined”* tells Simon*. “It feels like pruning a tree – when you cut away the needless and weaker branches, what you get is something much fresher and stronger coming through.”*

For more info contact Will at In House: **will@inhousepress.com** / **0161 228 2070**