

Dean Owens: *Into the Sea* DELUXE

Producer: Neilson Hubbard

Recorded: Mr Lemons Studio, Nashville, USA

Released: 30 Sep 2016, Drumfire Records



Previous press comments about *Into the Sea*:

- **One of Scotland's finest... fantastic stuff...** Bob Harris, BBC Radio 2
- **Magical...** Ricky Ross (BBC)
- **Great little stories wound round earworm generating tunes...** Folk Radio UK
- **One of the best singer songwriters in Scotland...** Sunday Herald
- **Accomplished well-crafted collection of Celtic Americana suggesting Dean Owens might just be on the verge of something big...** R2 Magazine
- **superbly crafted... an excellent writer and singer...** Maverick Magazine

Scottish singer/songwriter **Dean Owens** has made a habit of doing his own thing. This troubadour's unique blend of Celtic Americana is grounded in the idea of "home" while forever keeping a wandering eye on the road. Six solo albums in - following three with his previous outfit The Felsons - Dean is still taking new turns, both sonically and as a songwriter, and *Into the Sea* is no exception. It is a deeply personal record that enjoys moments of heartache, loss and longing, but flecked with hope and joy. Dean sketches out moments in lives - both real and imagined - and finds a truth and warmth that few songwriters can even aspire to.

The reaction to its release in 2015 was extremely enthusiastic, with the best reviews of his career, cross-genre airplay on a wide range of radio shows, and inclusion in many "Best of..." 2015 lists including a #5 listing on the Sunday Herald's Top 50 Albums. The new **Deluxe edition** includes 4 extra tracks - *Alison Wonderland* (recorded with Neilson as part of the *Into the Sea* sessions), 2 acoustic tracks - *Forgotten Shadows* (co-written with Hubbard) and a poignant **Warren Zevon** cover *Keep Me In Your Heart* - also recorded in Nashville but in a separate session (with **Brian Carter**). *Cotton Snow*, Dean's most recent single release - is a moody, swampy groove, with shimmering guitars and Dean's trademark searingly soulful vocal, inspired by the fate of Captain Tod Franklin at the bloody Battle of Franklin in the American Civil War. It was recorded with singer-songwriter, guitarist and producer **Dave Coleman** contributing guitar, percussion and other instrumentation.

Dean: **"In addition to the tracks on the original release I had a bunch of other songs which were recorded around the same time with a couple of Nashville friends, which I liked, but didn't have the chance to finish. It's been great to finally do that and share some of them on this Deluxe release"**

Into the Sea draws inspiration from all corners - from a rediscovered old school photograph to the twisting branches of his own family tree, from solitary winter days in the Big Apple to the trenches of World War One. Dean Owens tells vivid stories with beauty and colour. A collection of songs with distinct personalities that are rooted in the streets of Leith, Owens' Scottish hometown, but enjoy an appeal way beyond UK shores. *Into the Sea* is a record with roots in all senses of the word: musical, geographical, and familial. It is sweet and sublime, occasionally abrasive and often surprising.

Recorded mostly at producer **Neilson Hubbard's** Mr Lemons Studios in **Nashville**, Tennessee, Dean gathered together a roster of razor sharp US players and singers to bring an infectious, swampy groove to his finely honed pop sensibilities. Long term friend and collaborator **Will Kimbrough's** presence is felt keenly. A highly rated singer-songwriter in his own right, a producer and also sideman to the likes of Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell, Will has played on most of Dean's solo recordings. The album also enjoys cameos from two incredible female singers: **Suzy Bogguss** and **Kim Richey**.

This is the third album Dean has recorded in the USA, following on from *New York Hummingbird* (New York 2011) and is his second album in Nashville, after 2008's acclaimed *Whisky Hearts*. *Into the Sea* is a joyously contradictory record. Dean looks out to the horizon while knowing instinctively where his music was born and raised. It captures the spirit of his breath-taking live performances, be it one man and a guitar or with his six-piece band, The Whisky Hearts. More than being held in rapture by Nashville's charms, he has embraced all it has to offer to create songs that are fused with a perhaps familiar energy but also a unique musical style.

For more press information, interviews, hi res photos, CDs, MP3s, press tickets etc, please contact Morag Neil on 0771 288 0965 (email info@scarybiscuits.com)

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Dean details the inspiration, writing processes and memorable moments from the recording

The songs are mostly very local in setting and very personal. Many of them are set here in Scotland, or Leith to be more precise, with a strong Celtic flavor, but I wanted to blend that with my love of Americana. I've done a lot of travelling in the States and always felt really at home there, Nashville in particular. It truly is a music city and it's given me lot of opportunities. I believe it's the fastest growing city in the US with everyone, from Jack White setting up his Third Man Records empire there and The Black Keys, setting up shop there. Then you have all the great singer-songwriters, as well as the more traditional country, bluegrass musicians, and the good old honky tonks like Tootsies and Robert's.

I tend to take something that happened to me or someone I know, and turn a true story into a wee work of fiction. I'll use people's names, but usually change them to protect the guilty. When I was worried the lyrics were too parochial or personal, Neilson's advice was always: *'Ask yourself - what would Tom Waits do?'* That was his way of saying I should always go with my instincts on a song. It became a catchphrase for whenever we encountered a challenge when recording and it never failed me.

Dora

This is a song about my Grandmother Dora Salvona Owens. I learned a few years back that the Salvona family had a travelling circus in Scotland that Dora grew up in. I wrote this about Dora, the circus performers and some of the people I found back there in the family tree. You never know what's up there.

Closer To Home

This was inspired by a letter home from a soldier during WW1.

He was almost home when he wrote to his wife – *'the closer to home, the harder it is to bear the distance'*

Evergreen

Over the past couple of years I've lost people who were very dear to me and a lot of friends have gone through difficult times. I was thinking of them when I wrote this. Kim Richey's voice just lifts the song to a special place.

Kids (1979)

This is a true story about an old school friend. I got the idea for this song after finding my old school football (soccer) team photo. I was just looking at all the kids and thinking about what happened to them all.

Virginia Street

I was out for a drink with a friend in Glasgow one night and he got to reminiscing about the place he lived in on Virginia Street in Glasgow. He talked about sitting there with his woman and listening to an old record by Kris Kristofferson and he just made it sound like the happiest time of his life.

It Could Be Worse

I still hadn't finished the song the night before recording it. I finished it around 5am when I got the line *'it's only dreams keeping us apart'*. So often in this business chasing down the dream takes you away from your loved ones. I was still writing the lyrics out when the musicians arrived at the studio. We decided to have one run through of the song, before going for a take. Thankfully Neilson was recording it and the run through was THE take.

Up On The Hill

There's a hill near where I live in Edinburgh where I walk my dog Alfie. Up there I'm able to find a little solitude and time for reflection. I think everyone has a special place they like to go to ponder things.

Valentine's Day In New York

I wrote this while I was staying at the Chelsea Hotel in New York. It was Valentine's Day and I found myself wandering the streets alone, hanging out, going to the cinema on my own - while all my friends who lived there were spending time with their sweethearts.

Days Without You

This was written for a friend who was faced with losing his partner to a terminal illness. I loved singing this with Nashville singer Heather Donegan.

Sally's Song (I Dreamed Of Michael Marra)

This song came to me in a dream around the time that Scottish singer-songwriter Michael Marra passed away. In the dream Michael was sitting at the piano singing a song and this was the melody he was singing. There were no words I could remember apart from *'it'll all work out'* and the name Sally stuck in my head for some reason. Around that time I'd gone for a wander through the old neighbourhood where I grew up. There was a housing scheme [project] called The Fort that had been my playground. It had recently been knocked down. Some of the characters from my childhood make an appearance in this song.

The Only One

This was written for the same friend I wrote *Days Without You* for. I wanted a retro Everly Brothers feel so Will Kimbrough and I teamed up on the vocals.

I'm Pretending (I Don't Love You Anymore)

This is an old song of mine that originally appeared on my debut album, *The Droma Tapes*.

My friend Suzy Bogguss really likes that album and I've always felt this song would work well as a duet. I was over the moon when she agreed to sing it with me. It's just a good old-fashioned honky tonk love song.



ARTIST: **Dean Owens**
TITLE: **Into The Sea Deluxe Edition**
CATALOGUE No: **DRMFR018**

TRACK LISTING

1. **Dora** (05:33)
2. **Closer to Home** (04:40)
3. **Evergreen** (04:07)
4. **Kids (1979)** (03:14)
5. **Virginia Street** (03:47)
6. **It Could Be Worse** (05:56)
7. **Up On The Hill** (03:54)
8. **Valentine's Day in New York** (03:13)
9. **Days Without You** (03:15)
10. **Sally's Song (I Dreamed of Michael Marra)*** (04:51)
11. **The Only One** (04:28)
12. **It Could Be Worse - reprise** (01:25)

Bonus track

I'm Pretending I Don't Love You Anymore (04:13)

Into The Sea was produced, recorded and mixed by **Neilson Hubbard** at Mr. Lemons, Nashville, Tennessee
Mastered by **Jim DeMain** at Yes Master, Nashville

*Note for radio: Expletive in 2nd last line of *Sally's Song*. Radio friendly version available on request

MUSICIANS

Dean Owens – singing, strumming and whistling

The Seasideers:

Will Kimbrough – guitars, mandolin, mandola, backing vocals

Neilson Hubbard – bass, acoustic guitar, piano, keyboards, percussion, vibes, backing vocals

Evan Hutchings – drums & percussion

Jen Gunderman – piano, organ, accordion, harmonium

Plus

Michael Renne – upright bass

David Henry – cello

Eamon McLoughlin - violin

Joshua Britt – backing vocals on *Dora*

Special guest singers –

Suzy Bogguss - *I'm Pretending I Don't Love You Anymore*

Kim Richey - *Evergreen*

Heather Donegan – *Days Without You & Dora*

DELUXE EDITION BONUS TRACKS

1. **Alison Wonderland** (03:32)
2. **Cotton Snow** (04:21)
3. **Forgotten Shadows** (Dean Owens and Neilson Hubbard) (03:32)
4. **Keep Me In Your Heart** (Warren Zevon) (02:57)

1 recorded as part of main *Into the Sea* sessions, musicians as above

2 Recorded, produced and mixed by Dave Coleman at Howard's Apartment Studio, Nashville, Tennessee. Dean's vocals and acoustic guitar recorded at The Depot, Edinburgh by Craig Ross.

Dave Coleman: drum loop, live drums, bass, baritone electric guitar, 12-string mando guitar, pedal steel guitar, percussion.

Dean Owens: vocals, high-strung and standard acoustic guitar

3 & 4 recorded by Brian Carter at Paradox Productions Recording Service, Nashville

All mastered by Jim DeMain at Yes Master, Nashville

All songs written by Dean Owens and published by Myowensongs, except where indicated

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