

Blair Dunlop (ENG)



Short Biography

Blair Dunlop is an award-winning British singer, songwriter and guitarist. He has released 3 albums, 2 EP's and toured widely around the globe. It's an astounding list for a short 4-year career, but what sets Blair apart from his peers is the lyrical and musical maturity with which he writes.

His third album *Gilded* (May 2016) was widely acclaimed, with singles *The Egoist* and *356* gaining BBC Radio 2 Playlist status and also being remixed by Ed Harcourt. Prior to this Blair released *House Of Jacks*, which lived up to the promise of his 2012 debut *Blight and Blossom* and contributed to his win of the BBC Radio 2 Horizon Award.

Blair has now cemented his place as one of Britain's most exciting talents to come from the folk scene. The Guardian stated that the *House Of Jacks* proves Blair is 'an increasingly adventurous songwriter'; while The Independent on Sunday described it as 'fluent, lamentary and accomplished'.

2018 Blair saw the release of his 4th album *Notes From An Island* to rave reviews.

Full biography

With Blair Dunlop, the irresistible urge to record started back when he was just a child. "Mum and Dad got me a Fisher-Price recorder, a plastic thing about the size of a lunchbox, and I took it everywhere, recording gibberish that I sang into it while we were at the shops. I've always enjoyed that."

Two decades later, with the release of his fourth album, *Notes From An Island*, it's obvious that Dunlop remains consumed by the urge to make music. "The initial reaction has been so amazing," said Blair. Coming from a man still in his mid-20s, whose debut album, *Blight & Blossom*, won the coveted Horizon Award at the 2013 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, these are strong sentiments indeed.

From the start, his albums have enjoyed critical acclaim, with each one expanding his musical horizons, his audience and his prodigious songwriting gifts. *Notes From An Island*, with its timely mix of socio-political insights, tender love tales and impressive virtuosic guitar playing, is very much an album which reflects the age in which it has been created. Nevertheless, as with everything Dunlop does, it is fuelled by a desire to keep moving forwards, break down barriers and maintain the integrity which has established him as a favourite of not just a growing body of fans but of radio programmers and critics.

One of his teachers recognised his already developing musical talents and arranged for him to spend an afternoon recording a six track EP. "We just put a few songs down live," he reveals. "One traditional song, one instrumental cover, a Damien Rice cover and a couple of other things." Released in 2010 by a small traditionalist label, it received no promotion and is now a collectors item. A year on, for his second EP, *Bags Outside The Door*, Dunlop was ready to record his own songs, with engineer/producer Mark Hutchinson of Rooksmere Records. "I really count that as my first EP," he says, "but although Mark did a great job, I can't listen to it anymore because my voice has changed so much."

He and Hutchinson also worked together again on his second acclaimed album, *House Of Jacks* (2014). "I can listen to it a bit more than the first album, because my voice had dropped a little lower. There's song on there I still perform live, like *Chain By Design*, *The Ballad of Enzo Laviano* and *The Station*." By 2016, Blair had settled into a very productive trio relationship with drummer Fred Claridge and keyboardist Jacob Stoney, and it was with them that he recorded his third album, *Gilded* (2016).

After a shattering year personally, Blair returned with *Notes From An Island*, which features close collaborations with Ed Harcourt, Dave Burn and Gita Langley. Some of the songs derive from the emotional turmoil; a romantic breakup that was the backdrop for *Gilded*. His always-impressive guitar playing took another quantum leap, in part due to a love affair with his new Gretsch on which he wrote most of the songs.

He's already thinking about the next album, with songs already sketched out in a list he maintains on his phone. Before he gets to that he's looking forward to a major album tour, some select gigs and festivals in the UK and his second Australian tour.

<http://blairdunlop.com/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/blairdunlopmusic>

 <https://twitter.com/BlairDunlop>

 <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/artist/blair-dunlop/id403456867>

 <https://www.instagram.com/blairdunlop/>

 <https://www.youtube.com/user/BlairDunlopMusic>

“Dunlop is an outstanding guitarist and an emotionally persuasive singer. He is also, as demonstrated on this fourth album, a sharply intelligent songwriter who understands how folk can be enriched by tasteful rock and pop instrumentation.”

- The Sydney Morning Herald

“Some singer-songwriters grab your attention from the first note you hear, from the first song, from the first album. Blair Dunlop did that. I lent him my ears, and I was captured. He commanded through his music that I listen. And so, in a mere five years and now four albums, the chain remains unbroken.”

- The Daily Review

“An adept guitarist whose epic songwriting instincts prevail on a personal-political fourth album”

- MOJO

“Blair Dunlop’s fourth album finds him fully ensconced as a singer-songwriter of maturity and sophistication”

- RnR Magazine 2018

“On his fourth full length LP, Notes From An Island, he develops a more mature sociopolitical undertone to his music.”

- Guitar Magazine 2018

“The busy crowd...is testament to Dunlop's talents. Dunlop brings an air of tenacity while displaying a fine repertoire of well-crafted songs spanning traditional and contemporary. He's determinedly taking the traditions of folk in his own direction”

- THE INDEPENDENT - Live review 2016

