

Brad Reid finds his voice

NEW Scotland, the latest album from the Halifax musician, begins with a foundation in Cape Breton fiddle and adds flavours from across genres and lands.

By **Mark Robins** - November 20, 2020



"It turns out my dream is about music that is joyful, and sacred, and this new album is where I can really let go and be vulnerable. It's about connecting, having a sense of community, sharing musical tastes - and people can take what they like from it. For me, it's not about a dream job, it's about a dream life." - Brad Reid

With his latest album *NEW Scotland*, Brad Reid has found his voice. More than merely a nod to our province's Latin name, it is also one steeped in Scottish and Cape Breton traditions taken in a new direction.

"Even the band that you will hear, with congas, double bass and guitars, are different than your typical album from around here," says Reid.

With the album, you will hear a bit of something you might recognize like the fiddle or Celtic music. But what I bring to it now is a glimpse into another musical personality, a world where I am finally letting my true musical personality come through.

Reid's eclectic style comes from a lifetime of exposure to musical genres. From his jazz roots to classical music, world travels, and even musical theatre, Reid's musical life has led him to this point.

"My first instrument was the saxophone when I was growing up, and I got into jazz music," he says.

Going on to study jazz at university, he also learned to play the clarinet and flute. "I still play jazz occasionally, and that led me into a little bit of classical music because as a saxophone player, I got into playing other woodwind instruments."

With interest in different music styles from an early age, it has only been in the last couple of years that Reid found what he now considers his real musical voice.

"Having started on the saxophone, jazz is definitely the main influence, but I had all of this musical experience that led me to this new music with a focus on the fiddle," he says.

Reid's interest in the fiddle also came at an early age, receiving his first taste of the instrument when his grandfather took him to a Cape Breton fiddling festival.

"It was the first time I saw kids my age and younger playing the fiddle, and it piqued my interest," he says. "I got a fiddle and learned a few tunes."

Never letting go of his love for the saxophone, even while feeling the pull of the fiddle, it would be his grandfather's death during his last year of university that was the first step in his new musical trajectory.

"I started to feel a stronger pull to the fiddle at that time partly because as the oldest grandchild I wanted to carry on what he had been doing," says Reid.

Embarking on a first career out of university as a cruise ship musician, Reid's exposure to various music genres while travelling the world would also help lead him to his newfound musical voice.

But it would be in the last year, as he travelled with Cirque du Soleil as an ice skating musician in the show *Crystal* through North America and Russia, that Reid doubled down.

"It had been a dream job, and when I got out there doing it, it was amazing," says Reid. "But I started thinking maybe this isn't actually what I truly wanted going forward."

Hanging up his Cirque skates just before the pandemic shut things down, Reid returned to Halifax to tell his own musical stories built on a foundation of Cape Breton fiddle and a suitcase full of musical influences from across the world.

Forming the Brad Reid Quartet with Nova Scotia musicians Tom Roach, Jamie Gatti and James MacLean and with some help from guitarist Dave MacIsaac he realized his vision for *NEW Scotland*.

"With the album, you will hear a bit of something you might recognize like the fiddle or Celtic music," says Reid. "But what I bring to it now is a glimpse into another musical personality, a world where I am finally letting my true musical personality come through."

Brad Reid's *NEW Scotland* is now available for digital download and CD. Visit bradreid.ca for more information.

Following a sold-out show at The Carleton in November, Brad will return to the Halifax music venue for a second album release show on January 9, 2021. Visit thecarleton.ca for tickets and information.