

CARA DILLON 'HILL OF THIEVES' CHARCOAL RECORDS, RELEASED JANUARY 26, 2009

Irish folk singer **Cara Dillon** took a career break after the dramatic, premature birth of her twin sons in November 2006, and returns creatively refreshed with **Hill Of Thieves**, her fourth CD, but the first release on the Charcoal label she's formed with partner **Sam Lakeman**.

Hill Of Thieves has a significantly more acoustic sound than previous albums and also sees her returning to her roots with an outstanding collection of traditional songs. Already a highly acclaimed torch-bearer of the tradition and original songwriter, Cara and husband, producer and fellow musician Sam set out with a view to emulate the sound and style of classic albums by artists like **Planxty** and **Paul Brady & Andy Irvine**.

Cara delivers some of her finest performances to date with sublime interpretations of classics such as "The Parting Glass" and "She Moved Through The Fair" plus a fresh sounding "Spencer The Rover" which features Cara's brother-in-law (and fellow ground breaker) **Seth Lakeman** on vocals, fiddle and tenor guitar.

As you'd probably expect, the other guest musicians on this release are equally outstanding and the collection of fiddles, whistle, bodhran and uilleann pipes never fail to deliver a united backing while Sam Lakeman's guitar and piano provide the foundations for each arrangement. Other stand-out songs include the title track, **Hill Of Thieves**, an original song from Cara and Sam written about her hometown in County Derry; the little known "Johnny, Lovely Johnny" and a gorgeous, unaccompanied rendition of "Fil, Fil" in Gaelic.

The sonic quality and production is much earthier, direct, well rounded and at times much simpler than previous albums. Meanwhile, Cara found recording her vocals easier than before. *"Since becoming a mother to twins my time was so precious that I found my approach to recording this album changed dramatically compared to previous records. I was more focused when it came to singing and it took only a handful of takes to get the one."*

Cara's planned maternity break came much quicker than expected, when she went into labour whilst she was on stage in November 2006. Her two sons Colm and Noah were born three months prematurely and she and Sam endured an anxious time until the babies were able to leave hospital early in 2007.

"Sam and I had planned to take a long break to prepare for the arrival of Noah and Colm but were knocked sideways by their early birth. Our whole world went into slow motion for several months while they were in hospital. It was an extremely difficult time for us all even after they were allowed to come home, but it's been such an incredible journey so far and it seems to get better and better with every step."

CARA DILLON'S FIRST DVD - THE REDCASTLE SESSIONS

In 2008 Cara Dillon released her debut DVD **The Redcastle Sessions**. Filmed on location in Counties Donegal and Derry in the North of Ireland,

the release was a joint venture between Cara, Sam Lakeman, award-winning producer Robin Bextor (Eric Clapton, Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, 10cc, The Feeling) and Proper Music Distribution.

The DVD has 15 songs, including Dillon staples “There Were Roses”, “Never In A Million Years” and “Black Is The Colour” together with unreleased material such as the stunning “If I Prove False”, a duet with acclaimed acoustic guitarist John Smith which was also released as a single. It features a stunning ensemble of musicians including Grammy nominated guitarist Russ Barenberg and is a journey through the Northern Irish landscape and influences that have shaped Cara Dillon’s musical career. Accompanying the performances are a number of commentaries from Cara and the DVD concludes with a musical session in McReynolds Bar in Cara’s home town of Dungiven, County Derry, including a duet with her sister Mary.

Cara Dillon – Biography

Cara Dillon has one of those rare talents you only come across a handful times in your whole life. Her staggeringly beautiful voice has the ability to reach inside the soul of a song and imbue material with not only profound sweetness but also poignancy and depth.

Born in Dungiven in 1975, she was brought up in a close musical family immersed in the rich cultural heritage of her native County Derry. Having won the All Ireland Traditional Singing Trophy aged only 14 she went on to sing with Oige, De Dannan and then Equation. It was in this band that she met her husband and musical collaborator Sam Lakeman. The combination of Cara's expressive vocals and Lakeman's rippling piano and fresh production squeezed new life into ancient material. Their original songs sit happily alongside the traditional, reinforcing the debt they owe, whilst pointing to a distinct and distinguished musical identity all of their own.

It's Cara's unrivalled vocal talent and Sam's musical and arranging skills that have seen them signed to major record labels since they were 19. First, Blanco Y Negro (Warners) and then the enviably hip Rough Trade Records who released her three solo albums to date, earning astonishing critical success and showering her with countless awards and accolades.

Whether she's singing her native traditional songs of lost love and emigration, or their original compositions, you will be hard pressed to find a more emotive and captivating performer. Cara Dillon is at the very top of her field and one has the feeling she'll be there for a very long time.

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