

## 2016 Press Release

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With last year's announcement of a double nomination in the 2015 BBC Folk Awards (Folksinger of the Year and Best New Song), Jez Lowe has leapt into his third decade as a song-writing troubadour, on the back of a new and much acclaimed album – his nineteenth – entitled **THE BALLAD BEYOND**.

The year ahead will see him in front of audiences right across the UK, as well as in Canada, Australia, Spain and Denmark, not only solo or with his long-standing backing band Bad Pennies, but in new musical company, on new musical journeys.

It took the release of the compilation CD entitled "HEADS UP – 18 Essential Jez Lowe Songs", in 2012 for the acoustic/folk world to be jolted into realising that this North East of England-based singer-songwriter is rapidly gaining ground as the most "covered" songwriter on the UK circuit. Over the last couple of decades, the likes of Fairport Convention, The Dubliners, The Unthanks, Wizz Jones, The McCalmans, Mary Black, The Duhks, Bob Fox, The Young Uns, Enda Kenny, Cherish The Ladies, Tom McConville, The Clancys and scores more, have queued up to adopt his songs for their own repertoires. No wonder no less than Richard Thompson has called him "The best singer songwriter to come out of the UK for a long time", and personally invited him to play at Thompson's Meltdown Festival at London's South Bank Centre in 2010.

Jez Lowe's contributions to the on-going BBC series *The Radio Ballads* has cemented this reputation, with a Sony Radio Award among the many accolades coming its way. Half of the fifteen songs on the new album **THE BALLAD BEYOND** are Radio Ballads songs recorded by their composer for the first time, revealing not only the breadth of the radio series itself, but also that of the writing and subject matter that Jez has striven to reach.

But the bulk of Jez's time is spent "on the road". He's long been one of the UK's busiest folk performers, playing for audiences the world over, either solo, (with guitar, cittern and harmonica accompaniment), or with his band *The Bad Pennies*. A highlight of 2015's schedule was the *Men At Words* tour of North America, which saw Jez joining forces with James Keelaghan and Archie Fisher for much-acclaimed concerts across Canada and the USA. As part of *The Pitmen Poets* (with Bob Fox, Benny Graham and Billy Mitchell), Jez has helped to rekindled the fire in the tradition of mining songs and culture of his native region in a series of sell out theatre performances around the UK, which will continue with a thirty-date tour in early 2017. His current collaboration with fellow-songwriter Steve Tilston is likely to see fruition in a new joint album later in 2016, and an ongoing involvement with the quirky "supergroup" *The Broonzies*, will also resume in early 2017.

As BBC Radio DJ Mike Harding said recently, "No-one else writes or sounds like Jez Lowe", and chances are, even if you've never heard the man himself, you'll have heard his songs, sung at festivals, club-gigs, open-mikes or on CD, by the great and good, the professional and the enthusiast, the young and not-so-young. What higher accolade could a songwriter hope for? *'Jez Lowe is one of our finest songwriters.'* **BBC Radio 2**

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