

barbican

Blaze

WED 13 JUL

RAIN DOGS REVISITED

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Wed 13 Jul 8pm

Rain Dogs Revisited

Directed by David Coulter with Arthur H, The Tiger Lillies, Camille O' Sullivan, Stef Kamil Carlens, St. Vincent and Erika Stucky

Soloists

Arthur H voice

Stef Kamil Carlens voice, guitar

Camille O'Sullivan voice

St Vincent voice, guitar

Erika Stucky voice

The Tiger Lillies:

Martyn Jacques voice, accordion

Adrian Stout double bass

Adrian Huge drums

Band

David Coulter, saw, banjo, percussion

Dave Okumu guitar

Terry Edwards alto & tenor sax, trumpet, flute

Steve Nieve piano, harmonium, melodica, hammond B3

Thomas Bloch ondes Martenot, cristal baschet, glass harmonica

Tom Herbert double bass

Seb Rochford drums

FreeStage 6.15pm

Sam Lee & Friends

Sam Lee & Friends delight us with their pioneering live acoustic take on the sights, sounds and texture of contemporary folksong.

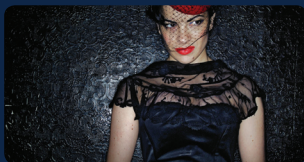
With an impassioned howl and a shake of wet fur, *Rain Dogs* was unleashed on the world in 1985. Back then, musically speaking, the world needed saving. Pop music was anodyne, throwaway. Punk had been and gone. *Rain Dogs* took music by the scruff and made it challenging and menacing, evocative and freewheeling, made it interesting again. It told us stories of New York's slums, of its shadow dwellers, fallen angels, down-and-outs. Of wrong turns and wrong people. It found beauty and redemption in small things.

It did all this with a voice that seemed nurtured by cigarettes and strained through a bourbon-soaked rag. The voice of a poet, a dreamer, a beatnik: the voice of Tom Waits. The American singer/songwriter and street poet had already impressed with the seminal *Swordfishtrombone*, an album that introduced a whole new acoustic orchestration - including a cornucopia of obscure instruments - to his already singular oeuvre. But *Rain Dogs*, the second in a trilogy that would be completed by *Frank's Wild Years*, took the bone and ran.

"The day that *Rain Dogs* came out I caught the train up to London and headed straight to Virgin Megastore where I bought the album on both vinyl and cassette," says Musical Director and multi-instrumentalist David Coulter, a man who has collaborated on operas with Damon Albarn, coordinated tributes to Leonard Cohen and performed alongside such greats as Marianne Faithful and Joe Strummer - and who is this evening's musical director. "When I finally got home and listened to it for the first time..." he says with a grin. "Well, it blew me away." He wasn't the only one. Elsewhere in England, Martyn Jacques was playing Waits in tandem with Brecht and Weill's *Threepenny Opera* and kick-starting his own career path with prolific punk-Brechtian trio The Tiger Lillies. Over in France, rock bard Arthur H was experiencing *Rain Dogs* as - his own words here - "an instantaneous shock, a stellar, sensual, sexual music: the art of making new with ancient." For others such as cabaret-leaning Franco-Irish singer Camille O'Sullivan, ethereal American singer-composer St. Vincent (aka Annie Clarke), Swiss punk-folk-performance-popstrel Erika Stucky and rock'n'roller-turned-one-man-band Stef Kamil Carlens, the album would bide its time before biting. When it did, it left teeth marks: "I was totally



Arthur H



Camille O'Sullivan



Stef Kamil Carls



St. Vincent



Andrew Atkinson



Erika Stucky

hypnotised," says Carls. "I played my vinyl copy so much I wore it out and had to get a new one. Tom Waits cast a spell on me. But I also felt a freedom that I didn't imagine was possible before. This man had his own way of doing things."

The music of *Rain Dogs* demands a free and open-minded spirit. And it's in this spirit – and with the blessing of Waits and his wife and musical collaborator Kathleen Brennan – that the musicians and singers stand before you tonight. Coulter, especially, comes steeped in the great man's aesthetic: in 2004 the ex-Pogue (and maestro of the musical saw, among other things) was asked to put together a band for the Barbican's resurrection of *The Black Rider*, a musical fable by Waits and Robert Wilson. Time spent working with his hero only increased Coulter's regard. Tonight's album-tribute project has been put together with insight, empathy and a healthy dose of rebelliousness.

"We want to go beyond just performing carbon copies of the original songs," Coulter says of a project whose band features Steve Nieve, Elvis Costello's long-time sideman, on piano; Thomas Bloch on glass harmonica and other otherworldly instruments; Terry Edwards on sax, guitar and pocket trumpet; the guitarist David Okumu and from the band Polar Bear, drummer/percussionist Seb Rochford and bassist and synth wizard Tom Herbert. Expect a set that doffs its battered hat to everything from cabaret and polka to jazz and spoken word. Expect – yep – the unexpected.

"Songs are living things," Coulter ventures. "Tom rarely performs his songs with the same musical arrangements; he often changes the style, the groove and the instrumentation. He revisits his music constantly." As to who gets to sing what, the singers

found their songs and the songs found their singers. Here the stories on *Rain Dogs* are being re-told in different voices, their settings revised, revisited, re-inhabited. There are no impersonators here. But there may be feral moments. There may be new tricks. "I knew I couldn't have nineteen guests, one for each piece, but we've ended up with a cast of very diverse artists who all have a radical spirit and who are all fans of Waits' musical universe," says Coulter. "They are artists that I've wanted to work with for a long time."

So here they are. The Rain Dogs. An ensemble ready to respond to the genius that is Tom Waits with the same sense of adventure and experimentation; one that genuflects before the classic 1985 album but – 26 years on – is unafraid of re-fencing its already out-there boundaries.

Right, then. Go fetch.

Programme note © Jane Cornwell

Co-produced by the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière (Lyon), La Salle Pleyel (Paris) and Montreux Jazz Festival.

There will be no interval in this concert.



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