

RED HOUSE RECORDS

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MEG HUTCHINSON

Beyond That

RHR-CD-270 • Release Date: September 24, 2013



"beautifully descriptive, introspective tunes. Her music also calls to mind her early influences, like Greg Brown and Joni Mitchell."

- Kim Ruehl, Folk Music About.com"

Award-winning songwriter, poet and mental health advocate **Meg Hutchinson** will be releasing a new studio album, *Beyond That*, on **September 24, 2013** on Grammy-award winning indie label **Red House Records**. The album reunites Hutchinson with veteran Boston producer **Crit Harmon** (Martin Sexton, Mary Gauthier) for what is her most experimental and intricate production to date. "Crit and I have worked together for a decade now. I wanted to build on that trust and that shared musical language and really encourage each other to find new sounds," she says. "I felt that I had reached a new landscape in myself and I wanted the album to reflect that." The result is an album reminiscent of David Gray's *White Ladder* where revelatory lyrics combine with a fresh contemporary production.

Hutchinson has been busy in the three years since we last heard from her. She published her first book of poetry, *The Morning I was Born - a Month in Poems*, and will have a poem featured in the forthcoming anthology *A Ritual To Read Together: Poems In Conversation With William Stafford* through Woodley Press. She learned to play the piano and established a home studio, giving her greater flexibility to explore new terrain. In her previous album, 2010's *The Living Side*, she spoke of wanting to unplug from technology and regain a stillness in her life. The songs on *Beyond That*, at once ecstatic and meditative, are evidence that she has taken this message to heart.

"I believe that the role of an artist is to keep braving that deep inner work, to keep growing," she says. "Creativity should be a method for transformation. This takes time, it takes quiet. I have spent a good deal of the last three years walking in the woods with my dog, sitting out on the rocks beside my favorite lake watching the sky go dark, learning a meditation and yoga practice."

The resulting songs are about coming home, about transforming desire, about how human love can open the heart for some greater purpose.

"We live in the desire realm," **Hutchinson** says. "If we look closely at our lives we see that all our senses are constantly hungry. We are addicted to information, to success, to consumption. I see this as a major cultural illness right now. We are always sure that there is something better, a better spouse, a better job, a bigger house. What we keep forgetting is that none of this pursuit is bringing us any closer to happiness."

This new cycle of songs shows us another way. In "**Only Just Begun**" she contemplates how craving has been integral to survival, but that she hopes to move beyond this instinctual blindness. She sings, "My loves are many, my needs are few, billions of light years, it's taken me to get here." She closes the song with the lines "My best work has only just begun, our best work has only just begun." This seems not only a mission statement but a call to all of us to re-examine our lives.

In "**Yellow Room**" she writes of a dream she had where she was getting on an amusement park ride but instead was flung into outer space and given a breathtaking view of our planet.

"I was filled with the sheer beauty of seeing the earth from far away. Filled with this realization that we are all a family inhabiting this one tiny planet in the midst of a vast universe. In the dream all our human arguments were meaningless, and what I was left with was a profound sense of wonder and love."

With ***Beyond That***, Hutchinson delivers a collection of celebratory hymns from a woman who has made it out the other side of some difficult years and who is inviting us to go "Beyond That" with her now.

For more information visit www.meghutchinson.com.

BIOGRAPHY

Meg Hutchinson is an award-winning songwriter who artfully documents the human condition. With a poet's ease, she makes the personal universal, allowing people's stories to come alive through her unique vocals and haunting melodies. Since the release of her Red House Records debut ***Come Up Full*** through 2010's ***The Living Side***, she has won high praise for her songwriting and has been featured nationally on **NPR Music**, **XM/Sirius Radio** and several times on the syndicated show **Mountain Stage**.

Growing up in the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts, the woods and ponds were her childhood muses, as were songwriters like Greg Brown and Joni Mitchell, and poets like Mary Oliver, William Stafford, William Butler Yeats, T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost. When Hutchinson inherited her grandmother's 1957 Martin guitar at age eleven, her love of words found an inspiring instrument, and there was no turning back. "Songwriting is not something I chose, I've just somehow always known that this is what I love to do. This is what I can't help but do," she says.

After graduating from college with a degree in creative writing, Hutchinson quit her longtime job on an organic lettuce farm and settled in Boston. In between gigs at pubs, coffeehouses and train stations, she won a **Kerrville New Folk Award** (2000) and was nominated for a **Boston Music Award** for her first studio album ***Against the Grey***. She went on to win awards at the **Rocky Mountain Folks Fest**, the **Telluride Troubadour Songwriter's Showcase** in Colorado and **The Chris Austin Songwriting Contest at Merlefest** in North Carolina, all in the course of a year, causing national publications like *Performing Songwriter* to take notice, calling her "A master of introspective ballads filled with understated yearning and an exquisite sense of metaphor."

She settled in Boston, where she quickly became an integral part of the vibrant songwriting community. Like every great performer who has come out of the Boston scene, Hutchinson took to the subway, performing in Park Street, Downtown Crossing and Davis Square stations -- honing her chops in the same method of predecessors like Martin Sexton, John Mayer, Paula Cole and Tracy Chapman.

After recording her live CD *Any Given Day* in 2001, and continuing to build a fan base throughout the Northeast, she went into the studio with esteemed producer **Crit Harmon (Lori McKenna, Martin Sexton, Mary Gauthier)** to record *The Crossing*. Released in 2004, this album was enthusiastically received by critics and DJs across the country, catching the attention of renowned folk/roots label **Red House Records**. Label president and veteran producer **Eric Peltoniemi** knew there was something special in the young singer-songwriter, "Meg won me over with the profound yet easy depth of her lyrics—rich words married to melodies I just can't get out of my head." Knowing her songs could stand alongside those by Red House heavyweights Eliza Gilkyson and John Gorka, Peltoniemi signed Hutchinson to the label. Teaming up again with Crit Harmon, Hutchinson recorded her Red House debut *Come Up Full* over the course of more than a year in Boston. An instant folk hit, the album was one of the most played on folk and college radio and landed her on many "best of the year" lists.

Meg Hutchinson went on to tour with such artists as **Lori McKenna, Martin Sexton, Susan Werner, Luka Bloom** and **Joe Pug**, handily winning over new fans on both sides of the Atlantic. She was also a favorite at **South By Southwest (SXSW)** and the **International Folk Alliance Conference**, showing that this was a young talent to be reckoned with.

In fall of 2009, Meg Hutchinson joined fellow songwriters **Antje Duvekot, Anne Heaton** and **Natalia Zukerman** to record the holiday EP *Winterbloom: Traditions Rearranged*. A collection of eclectic holiday and wintertime tunes, the CD features original tunes and songs from a variety of traditions--from a German hymn to a Yiddish folk song to a Midwinter Greg Brown ballad. Touring in support of the album, the four women performed concerts in 12 cities, making appearances on such popular stations as **WFUV, WUMB** and **FolkAlley.com**.

In 2010 Hutchinson released her second album on Red House Records, *The Living Side*, showing that she was a songwriter who had fully arrived. With this album the lens grew larger as Hutchinson tackled some of the big issues of the time, all while maintaining that intimate and relatable voice which makes her songs resonate deeply.

As a result of the messages inherent in her earlier albums *Come Up Full* and *The Living Side*, Hutchinson has been invited to speak and perform as a mental health advocate across the country at prestigious conferences and teaching hospitals including Johns Hopkins University.

Her own personal journey has led her to study meditation at the Sakya Institute in Cambridge, Ma since 2009. In 2011 she discovered the power of yoga and as a result of the positive changes she experienced she decided to complete a 200 hour Pranavayu yoga teacher training program in 2012 with founder David Magone.

About two years ago, Meg participated in the filming of an award-winning documentary entitled, "**For The Love Of The Music: The Club 47 Folk Revival**." Club 47 was the predecessor of Club Passim, a key venue for her performances located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The film was produced by **Ezzie** films. Ezzie was created by **Todd Kwait** with the mission of documenting the positive contributions of music to society. Todd has made films with such musical icons as **Joan Baez, John Sebastian, Bob Weir, Judy Collins, Taj Mahal** and **Tom Rush**. Meg is now working with Todd and Ezzie films to bring you a feature length documentary film that will explore many of the topics nearest and dearest to her heart; music, mental health, wellness, healing, spirituality, and how those elements converge in making the world a better place. This is an ambitious project that will be filmed throughout 2014.

For more information about her upcoming tour dates, please visit www.meghutchinson.com.

QUOTES

"In a brooding sea of inscrutable urban songwriters, her whispery, knowable voice feels like it's sharing her secrets with us. Set to elegant, free-floating melodies that feel both modern and rooted, her lyrics are always seeking, if not actually finding, hope at the end of life's dark tunnels." - **The Boston Globe**

"one of those works that quietly gets under your skin...nakedly intimate lyrics, and muted, bittersweet melodies."
- **Dirty Linen**

"beautifully descriptive, introspective tunes. Her music also calls to mind her early influences, like Greg Brown and Joni Mitchell." - **Kim Ruehl, Folk Music About.com**

"Meg got me with the first words of the first track titled 'Hard to Change:' 'Train whistling home in the dark—Christmas lights up in the trailer park.' With those very spare words I have both audio and visual cues."
- **Bob Edwards, Sirius XM**

"Hutchinson's falsetto vocal flights echo Joni Mitchell's technique for expressing the wonder of certain self-revelatory moments." - **The Bluegrass Special**

"organic, poetic narratives, each one communicating the singer-songwriter's keen and descriptive observations of life, love and loss." - **PopMatters**

"Imagine a somewhat less commercial Norah Jones with a more understated production—or maybe a female Nick Drake."
- **No Depression**

"Hutchinson's refreshingly rancor-free compositions demonstrate that music can be soft without being gutless."
- **Vintage Guitar**

"this lyrically-driven artist brings her soft and eloquent vocals to a series of poetic stories...pulling at every heart string imaginable." - **Out Impact**

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

iTunes Essentials - 2009

Best Female Singer Songwriter Album, Indie Acoustic Project - 2008

Finalist, Billboard Songwriting Competition - 2008, 2005

Starbucks Music Makers Competition - 2006

Winner, CMEAS East Anglia Tour in UK - 2006

Finalist, John Lennon Songwriting Competition - 2005

Finalist, USA Songwriting Competition - 2005

"Artist Most Wanted," Falcon Ridge Folk Festival - 2005

Winner, Mountain Stage NewSong Contest - 2005

Winner, Reach Emerging Artists in Ireland Tour - 2004

Winner, Kerrville New Folk Award - 2001

Winner, Rocky Mountain Folks Fest - 2001

Winner, Merlefest Chris Austin Songwriting Contest - 2001