

# Press Release

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For immediate release

## Chatterbox: debut album from new accordion duo Hannah James and Tuulikki Bartosik

Album Release May 2015



artist photos by Natalie Hemingway

There's a refreshingly joyful musical relationship at the heart of the new album **Chatterbox**, by accordionists Hannah James and Sweden based Estonian musician Tuulikki Bartosik. Two women known in their respective countries for resisting the confines of musical tradition, they've created a piece of work which is bold, exciting and completely original. Showcasing the accordion's versatility through assured musical interplay, improvisation and new compositions, and marked by a genuine sense of adventure, this is not like any accordion album you've ever heard.

Hannah and Tuulikki first met in 2011 at a festival in Estonia, where they were immediately struck by their musical affinity. Determined that they would one day work together, the opportunity finally came when they were booked as a duo at the Gower Folk Festival. "Playing with Tuulikki makes me feel very free as a musician," Hannah explains. "Our styles and skills seem to complement each other, and spark some very interesting - and slightly wacky - ideas!"

When it came to recording, they wanted to find a space that would allow them to replicate the freedom and natural interplay they'd first found in Estonia – somewhere that their music could flow naturally. They chose the remote and beautiful Stiwidio Felin Fach in the Brecon Beacons, where producer Dylan Fowler immediately got what they were about – and had some interesting ideas of his own.

"He took us to a cave!" Hannah laughs. Though both are used to putting music into unexpected contexts, Hannah and Tuulikki were at first somewhat taken aback by the idea – especially when it emerged that getting there meant trekking across country with their instruments. But

when they arrived, they realised immediately that the cave's rich resonances and rhythmically plinking water created a wonderfully evocative soundscape. "The natural sustain of the accordion just carried on forever, like an endless breath. It was the perfect environment for our instruments," Tuulikki says. The accordions began to speak to each other (hence the name **Chatterbox**) and Fowler added subtle accompaniment on guitar and Welsh drum. The result is four beautiful new improvised pieces that form the album's core.

Back in the studio, the magical atmosphere carried on through the remaining 5 days of recording. In addition to the improvised cave pieces, the album contains several new compositions and traditional tunes, but through it all shines the musical symbiosis of Hannah and Tuulikki – a vivacity and instinct for collaboration that sets them apart.

Despite the name, Tuulikki says that the process of making **Chatterbox** was very much about listening and responding. "It's making music in the here and now. There are no filters or thinking, it is just about what happens in the moment."

**ENDS**

**PRESS ONLY: For further information, including arranging interviews, please ring Joan Crump at Small Brown Dog, +44 1429 299330/+44 7530 542695.**