

Hungrytown: Further West

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UK/Europe: July 1, 2015

Label: Listen Here! Records

Genre: Chamber Folk/Pop/Acoustic/Singer-Songwriter

Cat. No: LH503 **UPC:** 889211342884

Further West is the third album from Hungrytown. Recorded in their home state of Vermont over a two-month period between tours of Europe, North America and New Zealand, it was made possible through a grassroots network of fans that raised over \$15,000 in a "Let's Put Hungrytown On the Map" crowd-funding campaign. Rebecca Hall and Ken Anderson, otherwise known as Hungrytown, are joined on this latest recording by long-time collaborator, cellist Suzanne Mueller and celebrated Vermont fiddler Lissa Schneckenburger.



Hall's lead vocal introduces the album's title track, a haunting waltz that makes subtle reference to many subsequent songs, all of which suggest progress toward a destination that may not be measurable in miles.

Travel can invite unforeseen, and occasionally tragic, events. "Don't Cross That Mountain," co-written with fellow Vermont songwriter Gene Morrison, employs a twangy guitar riff and reverb-drenched vocals to tell the true story of a disastrous 19th-century mountain journey.

In "Hard Way to Learn," a young mother runs away, only to be filled with regret when life fails to meet her expectations: "Tell me how your bright ideal/Measures up to a life so real." Schneckenburger's driving fiddle and Anderson's clawhammer banjo help reflect the desperation imparted in the lyrics.

"Day for Night" ponders our beleaguered, climate-changed landscape and the struggle to get by, set against an American dream mythology about as unconvincing as an old B-movie: "Like day for night, you know it looks wrong/You know it's too bright/Naive, they say/So easily fooled by shadows and light."

Perhaps the most striking moment occurs midway through the album, when Hungrytown presents Woody Guthrie's classic dust bowl ballad, "Pastures of Plenty," as a stark a cappella harmony duet.

There are two odes to night driving, the childlike "Highway Song," in which familiar objects assume fantastical forms when seen through the window of a car, and "Static," a noise that symbolizes disconnection: "The radio just crackles, only static, anytime I think of tuning in/I know just how it feels to think you've lost whatever signal you once had." Mueller's soulful cello graces the outro, and provides the perfect counterpoint to Anderson's hypnotic guitar.

Mueller is also responsible for writing one of the most poignant songs on the album, the elegant "Ramparts and Bridges," which references Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnet "On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven." In this song, Mueller reflects on the power of music to connect people to, or barricade them from, one another.

The album concludes on a note of alienation in "Troubles in Between," which begins with an evocative solo rendering of "A Child's Bedtime Prayer," maintains the theme of escape through sleep and ends with a vocal and cello duet that echoes into the distance.

Biography, press quotes and QR for tour dates overleaf. Hi-res photos available for download from www.hungrytown.net/promo.

Selected tracks:

Track 2: Hard Way to Learn (2:47)

Track 6: Pastures of Plenty (2:13)

Track 7: Don't Cross That Mountain (2:59)

Track 1: Further West (2:27)

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BIOGRAPHY



After more than a decade of world-wide touring and three album releases, Rebecca Hall and Ken Anderson--otherwise known as the folk duo Hungrytown--have earned a reputation for the quality and authenticity of their songwriting: "It's great to hear an act eschew sentimentality in favor of honesty and to prove that you don't have to go raiding the memory of others to find the stuff that really good songs are made of," writes Jedd Beaudoin of *Popmatters*.

Lyricist Hall is credited with compositions "that sound as timeless as any traditional songs" (*Northern Sky*, UK) while producer/multi-instrumentalist/husband Ken

Anderson is lauded for his "remarkable affinity for instrumental embellishment" (*No Depression*) and for crafting Hungrytown's "gorgeous vocal harmonies" (*Folk and Roots*, UK).

Hall and Anderson met in New York City, where they had already been performing regularly--Hall as a jazz singer, and Anderson as a drummer for a variety of garage bands. Their introduction to folk music came later, when a close friend--who died young due to a tragic misdiagnosis--entrusted to them her collection of 1960s folk albums and her guitar (which has since been featured on all of their albums). Inspired by the grit and true-to-life experiences she heard in these traditional ballads, Hall was inspired to write the lyrics that later became her first songs, aided by Anderson's flair for musical arrangement. Soon afterwards, Hall released two solo albums, *Rebecca Hall Sings!* (2000) and *Sunday Afternoon* (2002), both produced by Anderson. In the winter of 2003, the duo quit their boring desk jobs, moved to the green hills of Vermont, and decided to pursue a full-time career as touring musicians.

They released their first CD, *Hungrytown*, in 2008; *Any Forgotten Thing* in 2011; and *Further West* in 2015. The couple continue to spend more than half of each year on the road, especially roads in North America, Europe and New Zealand. Hungrytown's music has received extensive radio airplay worldwide and has appeared on several television shows, including the Independent Film Channel's hit series, *Portlandia*.

"A reverence for the music of our collective past, tempered by a keen modern sensibility and a gift for heartfelt storytelling. The music simply transcends any particular time or place." -- *Seven Days Vermont*

"In addition to their superb performances (she has an attractive pure voiced alto, he's an accomplished multi-instrumentalist) and the fluidity of their melodies, is that they pull off the trick of sounding both like traditional English folkies and old school Appalachians, often at the same time." -- *NetRhythms (UK)*

"I love the sound of Rebecca Hall's voice; there's a sweetness, and a worldly wisdom, in perfect balance." -- *Roger McGuinn*



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