

Secret Garden & Cathrine Iversen

SACRED NIGHT

This is the first time Secret Garden has made a Christmas album. The recording is a collaboration with Cathrine Iversen, who is the soloist on all songs. The Christmas songs are new, original songs by Rolf Løvland, except the 500-year old "I Know a Rose Tree".

The collaboration with Cathrine Iversen started in 2010. She's been a regular singer with the group on studio recordings and on concert tours since. Rolf says: *"The seed to this album was sewn in 2013 when I was asked to write a new song for Cathrine's local Christmas concerts in her hometown Fredrikstad. Since then, I've written a number of new songs. Last year we decided to collect this material and record an album of it."*

The timing suited us well since Fionnuala has undergone cancer treatment in Ireland during this last year, and we had to cancel all concerts and tours in this period. The fact that the Corona pandemic hit us in the middle of recording was an added challenge. We were not able to travel anywhere due to lock-down. Cathrine's stand-by, being a Pediatric Nurse at the Østfold Hospital Trust, didn't made the situation any easier. Fionnuala had to record her violin parts in her home in Dublin.

The album contains a mix of English and Norwegian lyrics. When Universal Music Norway learned about the album, they decided to release it internationally. *"It feels surreal"* says Cathrine. *"This started as a local Christmas project in my hometown without any plans of a recording. Now it's being released throughout the world!"*

"We've been asked to make a Christmas album many times", says Fionnuala. "But working with Cathrine has finally made this idea possible". Rolf explains: "For me, the biggest challenge has been to write new songs for an old tradition. Is there any room for new music in times when we seem to turn back to the familiar songs we love so much?" But when I realized that even the old favorite songs were all new once, I finally mustered some courage to write this album".

The result has become "Sacred Night". The album is due release on November 13th, but the first single is released already one week prior to this.