

## CROSSOVER DUO SECRET GARDEN ANNOUNCE NEW ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Triumphant in the Eurovision Song Contest for Norway in 1995, and responsible for the most-covered song of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and music streams in excess of 2.2 billion, the Irish-Norwegian contemporary classical duo Secret Garden – Grammy-nominated violinist Fionnuala Sherry and composer and keyboard player Rolf Lovland - are set to release a new retrospective collection of their music, alongside new acoustic performances, and musical rarities.

Opening with and named after the plaintive, evocative Eurovision-winning 'Nocturne', this career spanning collection showcases the magical melodies that happen when Rolf Lovland's piano compositions and Fionnuala Sherry's violin virtuosity meld together in perfect harmony. "To me, our music is always storytelling," says Lovland. "That's why I call it 'stories without words'."

The retrospective includes "You Raise Me Up", the song first recorded with the duo in 2001, and which now stands alongside over 1,000 others, in 40 different languages – and Rolf and Fionnuala's rendition remains the very original.

"It's all about chemistry," says Sherry. "He writes for me, I play for him – it's as if we have our own invisible musical bond, and it's always been like that from day one."

At first, the duo's mid-Nineties collaborations were turned down by nearly every major label. But Polygram Norway's MD secretary at the time, who became so enchanted by the demos, persuaded him to reconsider and eventually give them their first deal. "We were signed at the insistence of the company's secretary," recalls Lovland. "Nocturne" was then selected as the Norwegian entry for Eurovision 'by the smallest of margins' and went on to win the 1995 contest in Dublin – exactly 25 years ago this month.

That set the standard for their unusual marriage of Irish and Nordic influences, and their career took off in earnest. Since their 1996 debut album *'Songs From A Secret Garden'*, their music has spread slowly around the world, helped by novel marketing campaigns (in the USA they were promoted in bookshops) that connected with an entirely new market, and would see the couple grow to become one of the world's most successful instrumental acts – with multiple platinum discs to their name, and career streams now standing at an extraordinary 2.2 billion.

For Rolf and Fionnuala, the appeal of Secret Garden remains that listeners do not need an education in classical music to understand their unique musical language. "I feel I can tell a story – beginning, middle and end – without words," says Fionnuala. "Because of that we don't have a language problem.

"I think it's an emotional thing," adds Rolf. "And that's the essence of all music."

Secret Garden: "Nocturne – The 25th Anniversary Collection" will be released on Friday 8 May 2020.