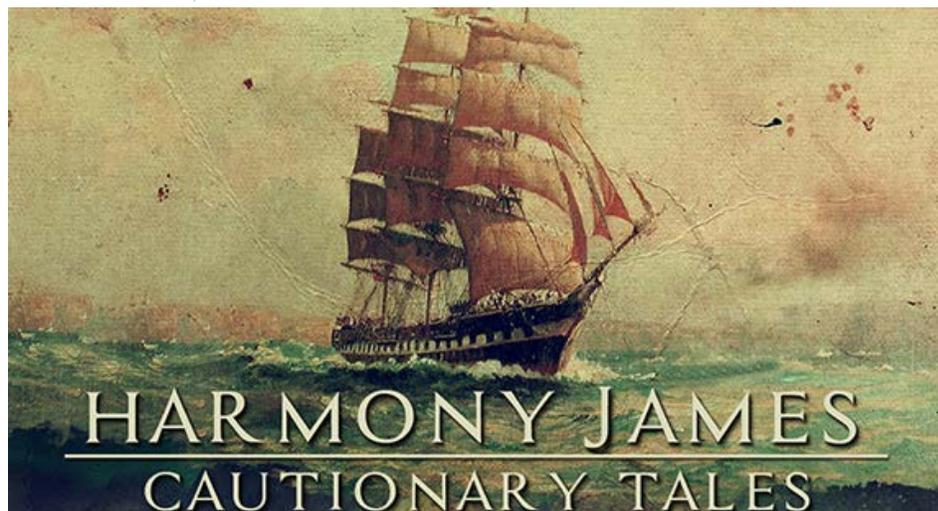


# COUNTRY HQ

EST 2004



Published on June 27th, 2014

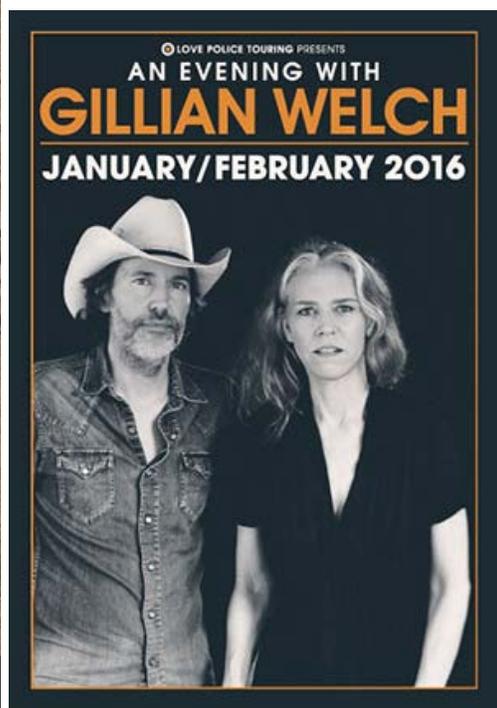


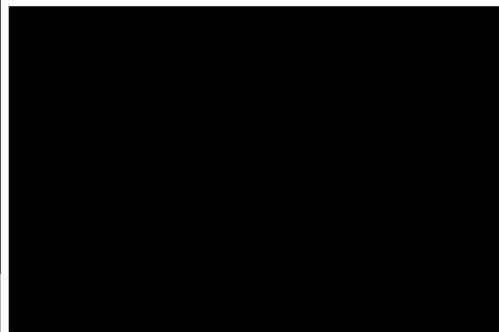
In a rare treat last September, CountryHQ was invited into the hallowed Albert's Studios in Sydney to preview and observe the recording of the then untitled third album from Harmony James. After the impression that her first two albums "Tailwind" and "Handfuls Of Sky" left on critics and audiences alike, expectations were high on this warm spring day. Not only were these expectations met, they were blown out of the water. And so, the anticipation grew over the last nine months for the release of what would become "Cautionary Tales".

Harmony James has always had an amazing ability as a songwriter. Her early work earned international accolades, with "Tailwind" becoming the first Australian song ever to win the country category of the International Songwriting Competition. On "Cautionary Tales", James songwriting has evolved and matured even further since her last album, as she writes from her own experiences of life and all that it can throw at you. However, as the title would suggest, several of these songs are like a fine shiraz....smooth and delicate to start with, then delivers a little sting in the closing moments. As Harmony describes, "Whatever you get from me there's always going to be a little twist!"

"Cautionary Tales" is a perfectly blended mix of songs that showcase Harmony James' depth as a recording artist and songwriter. Right from the opener "30,000 Feet" wherein a sublime steel guitar and fiddle blend seamlessly with her vocals to share her affinity with a place she describes as a "friend", Harmony shares experiences surely gained from her time as a jillaroo. Few artists have the ability to write about a location like this, nor have the confidence to let the track open an album. However, Harmony and producer Herm Kovac have selected this track perfectly, as they did with "Don't Say It" on "Handfuls Of Sky".

"Cold Western Wind" is an almost perfect country ballad, with weeping pedal steel and delicate mandolin





supporting Harmony's well crafted and vivid lyrics, whilst "Watcha Gonna Do About Me" is a light folk tune that could have easily have been sung by Joan Baez or Nanci Griffith. With lyrics like "I've tried wearing my heart on my sleeve, now I've long given up and I'm letting it bleed". Listen closely to the last reprise of the chorus and hear the tenderness in James' vocals and you can tell she means every word of what she is writing and singing.

"Skinny Flat White" is a great lead single and has untapped crossover potential both in local and international markets. Co-written with Brooke McClymont, it's a light hearted look at another aspect of a relationship developing and showcases the writers observational abilities in drawing from everyday events in our lives to inspire their work (and fellas, just in case you are wondering, Ms James is not a skinny flat white girl, but professes to be more of a cappuccino with one lady!!).

One of the highlights is the outlaw themed "In Another Life", a strong country track which is surely destined for single and video status in coming months given the songs great storyline. Add in some more great vocals from Harmony and this song finds it's way onto the repeat playlist very quickly.

And then comes "Icebergs (The Day That Never Came)", which just rips into your emotions, telling the tale of a child who has passed away. Harmony's voice is perfectly accompanied by a solitary piano on this tender ballad, as it was on "The Girl You See" on her previous outing. You feel right there with the songs narrator as she details the heartache of living a life without a child who has died at a young age. It is a moving, tender song, almost like a eulogy to a life lost and Harmony performs it beautifully.

With 13 tracks in total, these "Cautionary Tales" these songs not only tell the tale of the songs subjects, but also that of Kovac as producer and James as an artist, which is proving to be a highly creative synergy. Harmony James is possibly the most underrated songwriter in Australian music, however with endorsements from the likes of Don Walker and an ability to record albums like this, it is only a very short time until her star shines brightly both in Australia and overseas.

Facebook 16

Twitter

Pinterest

Email

Comment guidelines, edit this message in your Wordpress admin panel

**Name:**

**E-mail:**

**Website:**

**Comment:**

**Sign me up for the newsletter**

**Audrey Auld Tribute In Tamworth**

**Introducing Imogen Clark**

**Welch & Rawlings Bring Machine On Tour**

**Golden Guitar Finalists Announced**

**JASON ISBELL TOURING AUSTRALIA**

**Head Into Harvey's Bar**

**First Announcement For TCMF '16**

**Heartbreaker Of The Year – Whitney Rose**

**Hayley Gets 'Even' On New EP**

**Jen Mizes Sets New Album & Tour**

Want to stay in touch with the latest and greatest news, reviews, interviews and exclusive offers from CountryHQ?

**CountryHQ Newsletter Signup**

Sign up today for our monthly newsletter.



Country HQ - Country ...

Like Page

Liked

654 likes

You like this Be the first of your friends to like this

