



## Shirley Barr – Long Bio

Shirley Barr may be late to the table, but her recently discovered passion for compelling songwriting and performance shows she's earned her place. Working as the marketing manager at the Universal Hall venue in the Findhorn eco-village, her life was already immersed in live music. However, lockdown saw her signing up for an online songwriting course tutored by Boo Hewerdine and Findlay Napier. She hasn't stopped writing since.

Over the next three years she taught herself to play tenor guitar, ukulele and shruti box. Using these, sampled loops and field recordings, she creates songs which are quirky, insightful, and sumptuously layered, melding beautiful melodies with novel lyrics to create soundscapes that leave you wanting more.

In 2023 she participated in Moniack Mhor's four-month long *Stages* songwriting mentorship programme, curated by Boo Hewerdine. Working alongside eleven other emerging songwriters, and with support from various industry professionals, a collaborative album was written and recorded at the Chem 19 recording studios in Glasgow. The programme culminated with an album launch at Eden Court, Inverness, in October 2023.

So far, 2024 has seen the release of her debut EP, *Begin Began Begun*. The EP was produced and engineered by Ewan MacPherson (*Hushman, Salt House, Shooglenifty*) at the recording studio in Universal Hall, the same studio used by *The Waterboys* to record *Universal Hall*, their eighth studio album. Mike Scott was delighted to hear that the space was back in use again and said "*What a fabulous record by Shirley and the matching video! Beautiful,*" after watching the music video for *The Rope*, the first single from Shirley's EP.

The release was celebrated with a launch night at the Universal Hall venue. Support on the night was from Beth Porter of *The Bookshop Band*, *Spell Songs*, and *Red Carousel* string quartet.

Shirley's song *Little Thief* was awarded the Paul Tonberg songwriting shield at the 2024 Ardersier Folk Festival. She has been invited back to the 2025 Festival to perform a set.

She was also delighted to be invited by Findhorn Bay Arts to open for Iona Lane during the recent multi-award-winning biennial Findhorn Bay Festival, forming a trio with brilliant local musicians Amy Henderson and Jamie MacRae for the occasion.

What will be next? Watch this space...

*"What a fabulous record by Shirley and the matching video! Beautiful."* **Mike Scott** (The Waterboys)

*"Shirley's songwriting is intricate and understated. Her delivery is gentle and genuine, her sense of musicianship makes it hard to believe she has only been in the business for a relatively short time."* **Ewan MacPherson** (Hushman, Salt House, Shooglenifty)

*"Shirley is a cool new voice on the roots side of the Scottish music scene. Bound for greatness I'd say!"* **Mattie Foulds** (Caribou Recording)