Over the Rhine

2016 Christmas Tour Thoughts

One December, not long after Over the Rhine began recording and touring, we were invited to perform some seasonal songs on a public radio station. So we worked up a few carols and traditional tunes. It actually felt really good and conjured up an unusual mix of feelings from childhood: innocence, loss, wonder, joy, sadness. I think we were surprised.

People must have tuned into the radio broadcast, because we began receiving inquiries as to whether we had recorded any of our Christmas songs. In December of 1996 – can it really be 20 years ago? – we recorded and released our first song cycle of some of the Christmas carols that still haunted us. We included a few original tunes and called our wintry mix *The Darkest Night Of The Year.* Folks began snatching up copies and seemed to agree that they hadn’t heard anything quite like it.

We began playing concerts around the Midwest every December and found that the rooms were usually packed full of people who had bundled in out of the cold. If you stepped outside during intermission, you could make ghosts with your breath in the crisp night air. And it was dark – oh so dark: a time of year *with its own music.*

A decade later, in 2006, we released our first full collection of original Christmas/holiday songs called Snow Angels. What is it about Christmas music and the undeniable gravitational pull it exerts on some songwriters? So many Christmas songs had already been written. I think we were genuinely curious about the ones that hadn’t yet been written.

We continued to tour every December and these special year-winding-down concerts began to feel like an annual tradition – gatherings of extended musical family, without whom, we’d be homeless.

And when we released our third holiday album of original songs, *Blood Oranges In The Snow,* in December of 2014, we were still at it.

On our 2016 tour, we will be performing as a trio, leaning into three-part harmonies and making an intimate but hopefully holy ruckus. It won’t be all Christmas music: we’ll certainly mix in tunes from many of our records along the way. But hopefully it’s still true; that you haven’t heard anything quite like it.

We hope you’ll join us,

Linford Detweiler

*With Karin close by*

July 2016

Nowhere Farm

Hillsboro, Ohio