

NEW BOOK IN 2007
Loreena McKennitt: The Journeys and The Songs

Quinlan Road is pleased to announce the publication later this year, via Madison Press/Quinlan Road, of the book *Loreena McKennitt: The Journeys and The Songs*. Written by Loreena, this title will be available for sale via Quinlan Road and will offer an portrait of Loreena's creative process over the course of her recordings: her research, thoughts and influences. It will also serve as a visual travelogue of her journey, a tour that mirrors that of the Celts through Ireland, France, Spain, Mongolia, China, Turkey, Morocco, Greece and other lands.

To receive regular updates on this book and other projects – including the autumn release of the DVD/double CD set *Loreena McKennitt: Nights From The Albambra* – be sure to visit the Quinlan Road website at www.quinlanroad.com to join the Quinlan Road Community email list.

A WORD OF CAUTION: Some of you may be aware of a self published book by Niema Ash (*Travels with Loreena McKennitt: My Life As A Friend*) which purports to be an inside portrayal of the life of Loreena. Contrary to what the title may infer (“life as a friend”), this book has been the subject of recent privacy proceedings in the UK. The House of Lords has refused further appeal in the case, letting the High Court and Appeal Court judgments stand. The courts determined that the book seriously intruded in areas of Loreena's privacy around the death of her fiancé, breached a confidentiality agreement about business and personal matters and is inaccurate and false in many respects. We would like to clarify that no version of this book was written in co-operation with Loreena and it does not offer insights into her work and music.

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHDOG?

A tale of Media, Privacy and the Cult of Celebrity

“When the media is privately owned and commercially driven, how can we trust that they will always look after the public's interest before serving their own?”

Loreena has responded to some of the media coverage of the privacy case in which she has been involved. In an open letter (which can be viewed on her website at www.quinlanroad.com/ukprivacycase/) she sets out an examination of the role of the media and some of her experiences with it.

From her perspective, the issues involved reach well beyond celebrity and affect all individuals. “As spoken to in both the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, every person has an equal right to a private life. If an aspect of career places one directly in the public eye or if extraordinary events make a person newsworthy for a time, we should all have the basic human dignity of respect for our home and family life.” Further, Loreena notes: “As an artist, naturally I feel strongly about freedom of expression, and I feel vindicated that the law supported my view that freedom comes with responsibility for decency, fairness and truth.”

LOREENA MCKENNITT
AN ANCIENT MUSE TOUR

NOTES *from the* ROAD

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LOREENA ANSWERS *your* QUESTIONS

1. *How many people are travelling in your touring party, and what is your daily schedule on the road?*

Well, the number of people on the road can vary slightly when one takes into account the “relief” drivers: when the distance to be traveled by the trucks and buses exceeds the distance that one driver should undertake, additional drivers are needed. But overall, the number is somewhere between 35-40 people. This takes into account four buses, two trucks, caterers, merchandisers, lighting and sound crew, musicians, stage technicians, production and road managers, etc. It is like moving a little village around, setting up camp and striking it again, every day.

The daily schedule varies depending on what a person's responsibilities are. If you are “crew” – which is everyone except the musicians, the road manager and assistants – it truly must be like a never-ending day.

Load-in usually occurs around 8 am, and the technical setup occurs all day long until sound check late in the afternoon. Caterers travel with the crew and set up at the venue right away and start making breakfast and the day's meals for everyone. Someone often goes shopping for food locally.

The musicians and I often (but not always) travel earlier in the day to arrive at the venue for a sound check late in the afternoon. If we are lucky, we check into our hotel first. If not, we go straight to the venue and check in after the show at around midnight. Sometimes when drives are exceptionally long and it is too risky (due to potential traffic problems) to travel during the day, the band will travel overnight and check into a hotel room just for the day.

After sound check, we have dinner. It is one of the rare opportunities to see most of the traveling party, including the drivers, who likely will have been sleeping in the day (particularly the drivers of the crew bus and the trucks, as they almost always travel overnight.) This meal is a highlight of the day, and on this tour we have been blessed with exceptional caterers who are devoted to local fresh food. I love their company's name, Saucery, and it is run by a wonderful team of three people, led by lovely Suzie.

The show usually begins somewhere between 8 pm and 10 pm, depending on what country we are in – and it can begin even a little later than that if we are in Spain. Directly following the show, the musicians usually head back to the hotel and I stay at the venue to meet friends, business colleagues and special guests. Following this, I am usually found signing autographs if there are people waiting at the stage door. Then I head back to the hotel and crawl into bed somewhere between 1 and 2 am.

The morning always comes a bit too quickly and we are off once again, usually getting on the bus between 9 and 10 am, depending on where we are going. I usually spend these morning bus hours attending to administrative matters: some to do with the tour, and some to do with other QR matters back home. Once I arrive at the hotel or the venue for the next show, I may do some interviews.

Meanwhile, back at the venue at the end of the show the crew starts loading out the equipment and may not be finished this work until between 2 and 4 in the morning, again depending on how easy or complicated the load-out is. In Rome, for example, they could only send out one case at a time, of two trucks full of equipment, down an alley. Hence load-in and load-out were very long indeed. These stoic creatures, the crew, then trundle into the bus and into their bunks on the buses for a few precious hours of sleep before they get off the bus to load in again at 8 am.

And so, the next day begins. ~ LM

2. *I notice that in your tour programme, you request that no photographs to be taken. What is your concern about photographs?*

There are a few factors behind this request. The first consideration is that even though cameras have evolved to the extent that one can take photos without flashes going off, not everyone knows how to do this. I can think of a couple of concerts so far on this tour where, after all the pains we have taken to create an intimate and dramatic beginning, with just myself and a harp and a couple of other musicians, the lights flashing from the audience were like a fireworks display. Not only did it interrupt the mood I was trying to set for the song, I received numerous complaints from other audience members that they too found it disruptive.

Historically, it has also been the case in some theatrical productions – depending on what they are – that flashes can disrupt the concentration of the performers and cause them to forget lines. Then, too, there can be safety issues. I have been advised that this is still the case, although it is less of a concern for me personally from a safety standpoint.

Then there is the slightly thornier issue of taking photos of someone where permission has not been sought, or where the subject has explicitly asked that his or her photo not be taken, sometimes for religious, privacy or other reasons.

Additionally, now that we have entered the digital world, where photos are no longer kept in check as a result of the limitations of their format (analogue rather than digital), it is a fact that photos that would in the past have been kept for a photographer's private collection are now peddled for public consumption. This, finally, can lead to the "pursuit" of well-known people.

As most of you know by now, I do not support or encourage the cult of celebrity. I believe that these concerts are a special time for us to spend together, unencumbered by the distracting process of physically capturing the moment. Rather, they are a time to focus our minds and hearts on the unique and personal experience of what we are sharing. I would say that this applies to when I am signing autographs as well. For a person who has a public dimension to her career, constantly being photographed without

permission can lead into a world where people start feeling that they "own" you as a performer, and have "rights" to you, including taking your picture whenever they wish. The far end of this scale is 'stalking'

That said, we have not wanted to get heavy-handed with people who attend the concert. We decided therefore to simply place a courteous request in the programme so that the audience would be acquainted with my wishes and there would be no confusion. I hope there will be respect for my request. ~ LM

3. *The song "Beneath The Phrygian Sky" (from An Ancient Muse) seems to take a different approach to some of your other songs. Can you explain?*

This song was an attempt to bring some historical relevance to the present. Many times, as I undertook my research and travels, I was confronted with the questions: "What has history taught us, and do we have the capacity to learn from it?"

As someone who has simply pursued her muse through an informal excavation of the past, I find that the historical landscape is littered with themes of war, peace, love, self-determination, liberty, identity, home, and cultural, religious and spiritual interactions. This song is rumination on how, over time and space, our basic needs as human beings seem to have remained the same: a need for identity, for belonging, for liberty, for spiritual engagement, for ways to resolve conflicts of interest.

As I must remind people, I am not an academic or an authority, but, like many people, an average person who learns about the world, history and life in my own personal way. The fact that I can then spin that personal experience into a musical document that is shared with others is almost secondary to the experience.

Certainly, when it comes to issues such as liberty, self-determination and our need to actively engage with our society, I am reminded of that wonderful Edmond Burke quote: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men [and women] to do nothing." I cannot help but think of organizations such as Amnesty International, International PEN and Witness, which continue to undertake meaningful work in championing human rights, freedom of expression and encouraging people to move from being emotionally concerned with such issues, to actively working for our collective good.

If anyone is interested in further information regarding these organizations, we suggest that you visit their websites www.amnesty.org, www.internationalpen.org.uk and www.witness.org. ~ LM