**Down in the Valley – songs of landscape and legend
Concert Premier
at the Lansdown Hall, Stroud
for the 76th Stroud Arts Festival
Saturday 22nd October.**

*The Down in the Valley song cycle is inspired by the legends, landscapes, and characters in Laurie Lee's book 'Cider with Rosie' to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the local poet and authors death, in 2022.*

**Stroud, Gloucestershire, August 2022**: **Down in the Valley** is an Arts Council England commission inspired by the picturesque Slad Valley in the Cotswolds.
These six songs, composed by Stroud-based singer/songwriter/producer Lisa Fitzgibbon, are informed by the life and work of local writer and poet Laurie Lee, whose writing explored our relationship with nature and the importance of community:

"*So do I breathe the hayblown airs of home,*

*And watch the sea-green elms drip birds and shadows,*

*And as the twilight nets the plunging sun*

*My heart’s keel slides to rest among the meadows."*

– Home from Abroad, Laurie Lee

The songs in the cycle include: ‘***Swifts Hill’***, a seasonal musical portrait from the viewpoint of what Laurie Lee called the ‘Great Ancestral Hump’ overlooking the Slad Valley; ***‘Murder at the Cross’,*** co-written by Jon Fletcher, a traditional Murder Ballard inspired by the tale of The Stranger who returned to Slad a wealthy man, addressing the homecoming taboo’s bestowed on successful defectors, and how the village kept its deathly secret; ***‘Winter in the Woolpack’*** a rousing sing-along about Laurie Lee’s beloved village pub, inspired by the pictures on the walls in the public bar; ***‘The Death of Florence Tuck’***, a hymnal lament in response to the story of the tragic suicide of Elcombe resident Miss Flynn, who was found drowned in the village pond by Fred Bates the milkman; and the spirited ***‘Rosie’s Reply’***, co-written by local poet Adam Horovitz, attempts to tell the namesake of this famous book, Rosie Burdock’s, side of the story.

Adam Horovitz says that the songwriting collaboration on ‘Rosie’s Reply’ was *“a really good interweaving of the two disciplines.”*

**But who was Rosie Burdock?**

Many women have laid claim, and others have been rumoured to be Rosie of the Cider. When asked who he thinks the real Rosie Burdock is, Adam says *“I’ll argue with a twinkle in my eye to the ends of the earth Rosie Bannen was the real Rosie but that’s because she’s the only Rosie I knew in the valley. A tough woman who lived in a cottage right up to her death in 1992, that had no electricity, no running water other than the stream next to the house… she would welcome you in with home-made wine or cups of tea and you’d be subsumed in her hordes of cats and King Charles spaniels. All these things lead me to want to hold her up as one of the Rosie’s but there were many women who said they were Rosie… and I think all of them have some claim, not least because Laurie, by his own admission, made the character of Rosie Burdock an amalgam of several women. So, let them all be Rosie! But Rosie Bannen is mine.”*

Lisa will be joined for the concert by her band the **PowerFolk Quartet**: featuring Jane Griffiths on fiddle and viola, Jon Fletcher on guitar and mandolin, Colin Fletcher on bass, Lisa Fitzgibbon on guitar, ukulele, and vocals, with guest artists Sarah Nicolls on Inside-Out piano and Abbie Lathe on backing vocals. Local author and poet Adam Horovitz will be reading excerpts from ‘Cider with Rosie’ during the performance.

*“Researching and writing these songs has been a total musical deep-dive and culturally immersive experience. I moved to Stroud before the lock-down and spent many hours walking the winding paths and woodland tracks of the Slad Valley, imagining myself into the landscapes and soaking up the stories of days gone by.”* – Lisa Fitzgibbon

The **Down in the Valley** concert is proud to be part of 76th Stroud Arts Festival programme which is all about making connections between music and words, people, and places, national and local.

Dave Ayre, the Artist Director says *“Today we need connections more than ever, to remake friendships with each other and re-engage with the world beyond our four walls. As we join back in with life and events following what has been a most strange, and for many, highly isolating experience, the arts can help us reconnect”.*

**Down in the Valley** - songs of landscape and legend
by Lisa Fitzgibbon & the PowerFolk Quartet with oration by Adam Horovitz
as part of the 76th Stroud Arts Festival

Saturday 22 October 2022 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Lansdown Hall & Gallery
Lansdown, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1BB

Adults £14.50. Concession £10.50. Children £7.50

Book tickets follow link on project website: [www.downinthevalley.co.uk](http://www.downinthevalley.co.uk)

EPK: <https://www.downinthevalley.co.uk/down-in-the-valley-epk>

To hear all the Down in the Valley songs, and watch the song stories, visit the project website: [www.downinthevalley.co.uk](http://www.downinthevalley.co.uk)

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