

## The Unthanks

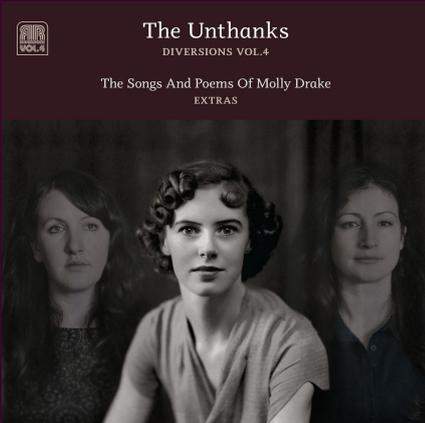
DIVERSIONS VOL. 4

### The Songs And Poems Of Molly Drake

RRM016 and RRM016LP RabbleRouser Music 2017

Released on vinyl, CD and download. Distributed by Cadiz Music.

The Unthanks release what has been their most difficult album to make so far, and yet they feel is also their possibly their best to date, thanks to not one but two Drakes, neither of whom are Nick!



plus

### Extras

RM017 and RRM017EP RabbleRouser Music 2017. Exclusively direct from The Unthanks.

An 8 track appendage to the album, released on 10" vinyl and CD, released on the same day but only available directly from the band's website & shows.

A wistful mother makes some simple home recordings in her family sitting room during the 1950s. Little could she have known that decades later, a daughter would become a successful actress, and her son one of the most poetic and influential songwriters ever. Less still, that more than sixty years later, the dust would be blown off her song collection, firstly in 2013 with the release of her own recordings, and now by The Unthanks, who believe her work is extraordinary enough to rank alongside and independently of her brilliant son, Nick Drake.

From the album sleeve notes:

*Hearing a woman, a mother, from that time, expressing the struggle between darkness and light, so beautifully, with such artistry, confidently, and yet kind of from behind closed doors, is as compelling a listen as we've ever experienced.*

The Unthanks have teamed up with Molly Drake's daughter, the actress Gabrielle Drake who along with being an invaluable and generous guide to Molly's work, recorded her mother's poems for The Unthanks to set to music. So taken were the band by her performances, and by how she brought the poems to life, making them her own as well as serving her mother's words, that Gabrielle is truly given centre stage for parts of the record, with The Unthanks setting spoken word to music, rather than turning the poems into song.

"I really do feel it might be our best work," writes pianist and producer Adrian McNally. "But the reason at the heart of that I think, is because it is perhaps the best *work*, we have worked on. Molly's writing and Gabrielle's performances are tools of great precision and truth. At the same time, it has been hard, partly because her writing is so sharp and the music so deft - its like driving a Ferrari for the first time - you're all over the road before you learn how to harness it. Our most rewarding Diversion so far perhaps."

Never intended for public release, Molly Drake's recordings were of limited sound quality, made by amateur enthusiast and husband, Rodney Drake. While the limitations of the recordings may give good cause for a fresh presentation, there is no crusade intended on behalf of Molly. Again from the album sleeve notes:

*There is no premise for this record, beyond our usual motivation as folk performers - to understand, connect with and share great writing. While we hope that more people will hear Molly's songs as a result, we have no delusions or pretensions of developing them on Molly's behalf. Firstly, we cannot assume that Molly had any greater ambitions for her writing. The role of songwriting and poetry in her life may have been no more or less than a private form of self-expression, or on occasion, a fun way to entertain friends. It's not for us to speculate. So while we can allow ourselves to hope and imagine that Molly might have been intrigued and delighted to find that others were interested in her work, there is no sense in which we might be realising her unfulfilled dreams of being more widely heard. Nor is there anything unfinished in her artistry. It's only the hiss and hum of her recordings and the fact that she herself never sought an audience, that has in any way limited the journey of her music so far. Her songs and performances themselves are wholly realised, beautifully accomplished, in a way that we cannot even hope to match, let alone develop!*

*We hope that her soft, sensual, radiant artistry reaches out to you as it has us. Or if you were previously familiar, we hope to confirm at least, that while they may have been folded into the charming musical vernaculars of the time, the quality of Molly Drake's songs is independent and quite singular.*

The Unthanks have also been able to interpret a few songs that Molly never recorded, based only on Gabrielle's memory of them, transferred to the band using the oral tradition. Bird In The Blue and Soft Shell Crabs are examples.

In the sleeve notes, The Unthanks have encouraged listeners to look up Molly's original recordings both to hear more of her but also to hear more in this record, because it's only by listening to Molly's originals that a view of these interpretations can be gained.

### **\*Second Release\***

The Unthanks will also release an appendage of Molly Drake work called **Extras** (or to give its full title, Diversions Vol. 4 - The Songs And Poems Of Molly Drake - Extras. RRM017), featuring a further 8 tracks (including two of Molly's best songs - Happiness and Night Is My Friend), released on 10" vinyl and CD, and exclusively available from The Unthanks website.

Diversions Vol. 4 - The Songs and Poems of Molly Drake and Extras are both released on Fri May 26th. Both however are exclusively available at show dates prior to the retail release date, and to pre-order on The Unthanks website, with special discounts on buying both records together.

## **GO TO THE ORDER PAGE FOR DIVERSIONS VOL.4 & EXTRAS**

### **april**

**18 NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME** New Vic Theatre **19 MANCHESTER** RNCM **20 WREXHAM** William Aston Hall **21 KENDAL** Brewery Arts Centre **22 EDINBURGH** The Queens Hall **23 BERWICK UPON TWEED** Maltings Theatre **26 BIRMINGHAM** The Glee Club **27 CAMBRIDGE** Corn Exchange **28 BASINGSTOKE** The Anvil **29 CARDIFF** Tramshed **30 BRADFORD ON AVON** Wiltshire Music Centre

### **may**

**01 BRIGHTON** The Old Market **02 SOUTHAMPTON** Turner Sims **03 LONDON** The Albany **06 CLITHEROE** The Grand **07 BARROW IN FURNESS** The Forum **10 RUNCORN** Brindley **11 LEEDS** City Varieties **12 LEEDS** City Varieties **13 STOCKTON ON TEES** ARC **14 NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE** Theatre Royal **25 DUBLIN** Vicar St **28 LONDON 3PM** The Barbican Milton Court **28 LONDON 7.30PM** The Barbican Milton Court

**Tickets:** [www.the-unthanks.com](http://www.the-unthanks.com)