

Sarah Jane Morris and Antonio Forcione come together in a worldwide tour to promote the launch of their collaborative album: **Compared to What**.

This duo have each been compared to an impressive array of musical geniuses including Janis Joplin and Tom Waits (vocally) as well as Jimi Hendrix (instrumentally) – a comparison Antonio wears with pride. Django Reinhardt also comes to mind. In truth, Sarah Jane and Antonio are great artists in their own right. Channelling their energies together, they share audiences in Italy, Britain, and all over the world. Together they increase their spheres of appreciation, giving loyal fans the chance to experience favourites afresh, as well as attracting new audiences with the strength and artistry of their unique partnership.

Compared to What is the result of a fruitful and varied songwriting collaboration. It covers a number of traumatic social issues and many songs of emotional intensity which reflect the urgent concern both artists feel for the tragedy of refugees. One song in particular deals with the boat people - a drama most keenly felt in Italy and by Italians - with Sarah Jane and Antonio acting as tribunes of conscience. This sense of witness describes many of Sarah Jane's most passionately felt songs from the recent past, and in new material Antonio adds his own awareness and artistic response. Alongside the songs of conscience, **Compared to What** includes some wry comedy, also love songs and some memorable covers, notably Stevie Wonder and Bob Dylan.

Sarah Jane's and Antonio's set touches heights of great musical beauty both in Antonio's unique virtuoso guitar playing and Sarah Jane's legendary voice, now more subtle and persuasive than ever, with range and power undiminished. The whole is a triumph of collaboration between two of the most individual and richly talented musicians on the world stage.

About Sarah-Jane Morris

«Leave your preconceptions at home,» begins one London critic's assessment of sensual singer-songwriter Sarah Jane Morris, who straddles rock, blues, jazz and soul with a goosebump-raising four octave range that rumbles from the heels of her size eight shoes to the tips of her flame-red mane. Famed for her association with the Communards in the mid-80s and infamous for a banned rendition of the classic Me and Mrs Jones, Sarah Jane Morris has always attracted as much attention for her politics as for her soul-driven, seismic voice. Many solo albums later, pop stardom on the continent, and a diverse set of musical collaborations on record, film and stage, Morris continues to steer her unorthodox career to greater heights. Sarah Jane has a regular residency at Ronnie Scott's in London where she performs a week of 2 sold out shows a night with an incredible 12 piece band and special guests.

Dedicated to the people of Africa and the music of that continent that has inspired so many artists for so long, Sarah Jane's latest album Bloody Rain brings together a stunningly diverse group of performers. Among a raft of guests are the Zimbabwe-born singer Eska, Senegal's Seckou Keita on kora, the Soweto Gospel Choir and Adam Glasser from South Africa, American/ Israeli jazz trumpeter Avishai Cohen, the UK-Caribbean saxophonist Courtney Pine and the former James Brown arranger Pee Wee Ellis - and of course the soulmates from Morris's touring band including guitarist and co-writer of many of the new songs Tony Remy, Sting sideman Dominic Miller, Henry Thomas, Martyn Barker, Tim Cansfield and Adriano Adewale. On vocals Morris is accompanied on the album by a magnificent choir – well-known British jazz singer Ian Shaw, her son Otis Coulter, Janine Johnson,

Lilybud Dearsley, Gianluca Di Martini and Roberto Angrisani. The music makes you want to dance whilst asking you to think.

«Cello Songs» was her previous album which was recorded live with Enrico Melozzi (Cello), Dominic Miller (nylon string guitar) and 14 Cellos. This album was launched in Rome at the end of 2011. Sarah Jane was invited to perform at the Vatican at Christmas with the orchestra and Dominic Miller and it was broadcast live on Italian TV and this is the single «Fast Car»

The first performance in the UK was at the prestigious Hay Literary Festival on June 6th and the grand launch was at the Purcell Rooms as part of the London Jazz Festival, followed by dates around the country. Photo below from the Purcell Rooms concert which included a 10 piece gospel choir including Cleveland Watkiss, Sara Gillespie, Gill Manley and many other names).

«Where it Hurts» was her previous album which is a stunning co-written and co-produced album. The tracks are co-written with Dominic Miller (Sting's right hand man and co-writer of 'Shape My Heart') and Martyn Barker (Billy Bragg and The Blokes) and it was launched at Ronnie Scotts (London) and Blue Note (Milan).

«Where it Hurts» is also the title of Sarah Jane's one woman show which was previewed at the Edinburgh Festival to rave reviews. Co-written with Michael Crompton (Silent Witness), with Dominic Miller accompanying on guitar, this show has been touring the UK theatres and Arts Centres. It includes stories and songs from her childhood through to her collaboration on the song 'Coal Not Dole' with Matt Fox (Happy End) and Kay Sutcliffe (a Kent Miners wife) for the miners strike, The Communards, nearly playing the part of Janis Joplin in the Paramount movie and beyond.

Jane released a new rendition of Don't Leave Me This Way, twenty years after it hit #1 in Britain and became the best selling single of the year. In September 2008, Sarah Jane released her second CD «Migratory Birds» in collaboration with Marc Ribot (Tom Waits). The 12 track CD is a collection of songs from Bob Dylan, Rickie Lee Jones, Janis Ian, Damien Rice, Dolly Parton and Velvet Underground.

Her international success includes hits in Japan, Germany, Greece (two #1 records), and Italy, where she was been awarded the key to the city of Verona, honoured with a European Grammy and won the international Sanremo song festival (only for the award to be swiped by runner-up Grace Jones!). Concert highlights have included a Swing Ladies concert with Chaka Khan and Monserrat Caballe, a performance in front of 10,000 fans in Athens, the Red Wedge Tour, Venice Opera House, The Verona Arena, Taormina Amphitheatre in Sicily, Royal Albert Hall, European Tour with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, numerous sell-out weeks at Ronnie Scott's Club in London, and the What Women Want concert with Sinead O'Connor and Chrissie Hynde at the Royal Festival Hall.

«Just four days in January 2009 embraced my first hearing of the music from 'Where It Hurts', a night at London's Pizza Express Jazz Club where Sarah Jane was mesmerically performing live (nothing like as regular a privilege for London's music-lovers as it should be), and Obama's historic inauguration on 20 January.» John Fordham, The Guardian 2009

«A voice that can excite shivers of passion and delight ... Soaring, swooping, sensual and sophisticated, this voice is more than a style, it's a force of nature ... Torch song, soul standard or smoky blues, the message remains constant: human passion with a dazzling voice.» Neil Spencer, The Observer

About Antonio Forcione

From the first moment Antonio walks on stage to rapturous applause, a humble smile on his face, guitar in hand, you know you are in the presence of a true artist and are in for an evening with a touch of magic. And as the first deep, warm, intense notes float through the auditorium, you can hear a pin drop and feel the sonic spell of his guitar weaving through the room. As one critic put it «Imagine an Italian hybrid of Michael Hedges, John McLaughlin and Django Rheinhardt ... ferocious, rampaging, controlled power, meticulous precision and clarity of expression ... astonishing musical personality».

Antonio's impressive 19 albums and extensive international tours in festivals and theatres - both as a solo artist, in duo and with his acoustic quartet - have brought high critical acclaim from as far as Australia and Hong Kong to the Caribbean, Russia and all over Europe. He has the «hands of a tarantula and the heart of a lion», as another critic so expressively phrased it! Antonio's numerous awards line the shelf above the piano in his west London home, a far cry from his humble beginnings in a small village in southern Italy from where he worked his way through art school, eventually performing on the streets of London to win the Covent Garden Street Entertainer of the Year Award. This led straight to a BBC TV appearance and a European tour. He hasn't looked back since, nor has he ever forgotten his roots. If you listen closely to his compositions you can feel the nostalgia for the village, the olive groves, the dusty streets and the first loves of a young boy.

Having completed his well-received album 'Sketches of Africa' he is now focusing on Cuba where he is collaborating with artists such as Pancho Amat, Alejandro Martinez and Jorge Luis Chicoy for his next album. This also includes his involvement in a music-documentary film that will be recorded sometime in late 2017.

Antonio is also one third of the AKA Trio, where he performs alongside kora maestro Seckou Keita from Senegal, and percussionist Adriano Adewale from Brazil. The trio are due to tour the UK in 2017.

Previous albums include collaborations with fellow performers such as Charlie Haden, Trilok Gurtu, Kay Eckhardt, Sabina Sciubba, Claudio Roditi, Rossana Casale.

Artistic, intense and formidably inventive, Antonio is a performer of genuine distinction. Ever unpredictable, his is a celebration of the unexpected elements in life, a music of rare delicacy, humour and, not least, passion.

Antonio Forcione has performed and recorded with:

Diego el Cigala / Charlie Haden / Trilok Gurtu / Birelli Lagrene / Billy Sheehan / Soweto Choir / Bulgarian Voices Andy Sheppard / ESTRUNA / Boulou Ferre / Omar Sosa / Larry Coryell / Angelique Kidjo / Sarah Jane Morris / Joji Hirota / Catrin Finch / Chiwoniso Maraire / Erkan Ogur / Augusto

Mancinelli / Seckou Keita / Ulf Wakenius / Peter Sprague / Jason Rebello / Hugh Warren / Gwyneth Herbert / Noemi / Ronu Majumdar / Martin Taylor / Barney Kessel / Dominic Miller / Neil Stacey / Boothby Graffoe / Chano Dominguez / Harvie Swartz / Claudio Roditi / John Paricelli / John Etheridge / Rossana Casale... and many others

Awards:

2014 Oscar della Lirica Award in Qatar

2014 Enriquez Prize, Sirolo, Italy – for sharing worldwide cultural influences through his music, and extraordinary technical skills.

2011 Award from the Museo Internazionale della fisarmonica

2009 Enriquez Prize, Sirolo for Musician of the Year

2008 'Re Manfredi' cultural award for international musical recognition

2004 Adelaide Festival Award for Excellence with Boothby Graffoe

2001 Best Spirit of the Fringe Award, Edinburgh Festival

1997 Barcelona, the Golden Nose Award for comedy with Ole