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SHAWN COLVIN & KT TUNSTALL
Together on Stage

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Sponsored by Dina Carey, Jeff & Maureen Lewis, Michelle Zimmerman D'Couto, and Ray Liaw & Joseph Gregory

Shawn Colvin

In an era when female singer-songwriters are ever more ubiquitous, Shawn Colvin stands out as a singular and enduring talent. Her songs are slow-release works of craft and catharsis that become treasured, lifetime companions for their listeners. As a storyteller, Colvin is both keen and warm-hearted, leavening even the toughest tales with tenderness, empathy, and a searing sense of humor. In the 30 years since the release of her debut album, Colvin has won three GRAMMY Awards, released thirteen albums, written a critically acclaimed memoir, maintained a non-stop national and international touring schedule, appeared on countless television and radio programs, had her songs featured in major motion pictures and created a remarkable canon of work.

Shawn Colvin Live (2009), was recorded during a three-night engagement at San Francisco's famous jazz club, Yoshi's, and captures the beauty and intimacy of Colvin's performances. Highly praised, the album was honored with a GRAMMY Award nomination for Best Contemporary Folk Recording.

All Fall Down (2012) reunited Colvin with her longtime friend, producer extraordionaire Buddy Miller. Recorded in Miller's home studio in Nashville, the album features performances by Alison Krauss, Emmylou Harris, Jakob Dylan, Viktor Krauss and Julie Miller.

The release of A*ll Fall Down* was simultaneous with that of her William Morrow/Harper Collins–published memoir, *Diamond In The Rough*. *Diamond in the Rough* looks back over Colvin's rich lifetime of highs and lows with stunning insight and candor. Through its pages we witness the inspiring story of a woman honing her artistry, finding her voice, and making herself whole.

Uncovered (2015), the long-awaited follow up to fan-favorite *Cover Girl*, is a second collection of Colvin's ever-masterful covers. It features Colvin's inspired interpretations of songs by Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Tom Waits, Stevie Wonder, Robbie Robertson, Graham Nash and more.

In June 2016, Colvin and longtime friend Steve Earle united to release, the duo album Colvin & Earle. Colvin & Earle is a true standout in careers already filled with peaks and masterpieces. The album received high praise – NPR asserted that the pair "Elevated their collaboration to the level of top-flight album-making, bringing seemingly opposing impulses to the process."

Colvin was born in Vermillion, South Dakota, where she lived until she was eight. A small-town childhood in the university town of Carbondale, IL. drew her to the guitar by the age of 10. She made her first public appearance on campus at the University of Illinois at age 15. By the late 1970's Colvin was singing in a Western Swing band in Austin, TX.—the city she now calls home. She moved to New York at the decade's end as a member of the Buddy Miller Band where she met producer, guitarist and co-writer John Leventhal. Leventhal inspired Colvin to find her own voice as a songwriter. She began honing her skill and was soon signed to Columbia Records. Her first album, *Steady On*, produced by Leventhal, won the GRAMMY Award for Best Contemporary Folk Recording.

Colvin continued to win fans and impress critics with subsequent releases, *Fat City* (1992) and *Cover Girl* (1994). In 1996 she released *A Few Small Repairs*, also produced by Leventhal, which would prove to be her breakthrough. The song "Sunny Came Home" gave Colvin a Top 10 hit, a platinum-selling album and two of GRAMMY's biggest honors: Record of the Year and Song of the Year.

Holiday Songs And Lullabies (1998), was recorded while Colvin was eight months pregnant with her daughter Caledonia. Her next album, *Whole New You* (2001) found Colvin examining new motherhood and the responsibilities of family

2018 saw the release of *The Starlighter*, an album of songs adapted from the children's music book *Lullabies* and *Night Songs. The Starlighter* showcases traditional numbers and children's standards in an elegant and graceful setting. The result is an album that captures the warmth and tenderness of children's lullabies in a moving and timeless offering.

September 2019, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of *Steady On*, Colvin released a newly-recorded version of her landmark debut. Colvin crafts a truly mesmerizing reinvention, performing the album with just her voice and guitar. The *Steady On 30th Anniversary Acoustic Edition* strips each song to the core, placing Colvin's songwriting masterclass on full display. "I've played these songs countless times, primarily as a solo acoustic artist," she says. "all in all, this is the incarnation that feels most genuine. This represents who I am as an artist and all I ever wanted to be, and I believe it does its predecessor proud."

Colvin was most recently honored with an induction into the 2019 Austin City Limits Hall of Fame, alongside legendary artists Lyle Lovett and Buddy Guy. In a moving induction speech, Jackson Browne praised her as "ineffable" – 'that which is impossible to express in words' – and extolled, "Not many writers are able to do what Shawn does. It's a very special way of relating what really matters. It takes an original to get our attention. Shawn is utterly original in her singing, and original in what she speaks about in her songs."

Over the course of three decades, Shawn Colvin has established herself as a captivating performer and a revered storyteller, well-deserving of the commendation of her peers and the devoted audiences who have been inspired by her artistry. As she enters her thirtieth year as a songwriter and performer, she continues to reaffirm her status as a vital voice in music.

KT Tunstall

KT Tunstall has never been one for creative stasis. The Grammy® nominated Scottish Musician burst onto the music scene with her 2004 multi-platinum debut, Eye to the Telescope, which spawned the global hits "Black Horse and the Cherry Tree" and "Suddenly I See." These songs, paired with her pioneering looping skills, established Tunstall as a captivating and dynamic mustsee performer, as well as a Songwriter with a singular knack for balancing introspective folk and propulsive rock.

"I feel there are two immediate, recognizable pillars of my style," she says. "I have this troubadour, acoustic guitar-driven, emotional side. Then there's definitely a rocker side of me with much sharper teeth."

In the last few years, Tunstall has expanded on these musical selves by focusing on a trilogy of records, where each album zeroes in on a single concept: soul, body and mind. The first, 2016's *KIN*, was the soul record; 2018's *WAX* was the body record, and the new *NUT* is the mind record. "*NUT* is the culmination of a seven-year project," Tunstall says. "It's the final part of a trilogy of records that has spanned probably the most extreme and profound period of change in my life. The personal arc of these three records has been pretty extraordinary for me."

KT describes the album name; "Growing up in Scotland, if someone was losing their temper you would say, 'Dinny lose yer Nut!' I love that the word also means a seed. The album artwork is all about the brain being a garden; you reap what you sow, you need to keep the weeds at bay, and there is an almost supernatural beauty to when things blossom. But it all needs constant tending; it's always changing and able to change."

Tunstall started working on *NUT* at home during the pandemic lockdown, at the same time she was writing a musical. "I was writing songs for a full cast following a storyline, which I'd never done before," she explains. "It's exciting. You're writing songs for all these different characters, it's totally collaborative, prescriptive and structured writing." But while words for this project came easily, lyrics for *NUT* were much more of a challenge.

"I found it so impossible to connect with the place in my subconscious, or creative consciousness, that produces my personal lyrics," Tunstall says. "I just didn't feel I had anything to say." In hindsight, she chalked up this lack of lyrical conviction partly to not having a deadline ("I'm great under pressure; I'm very easily distracted if there isn't an end point in sight") but mostly due to the stress and tension unfolding in the world at large due to the pandemic.

"I'm a dreamer, and I've always been a dreamer," she explains. "And to write lyrics, I have to allow myself to unhook from the day to day and go into this other realm. And I found that all through the pandemic, the present moment was holding on to the back of my shirt every minute and just would not let me go."

She found her writing groove thanks to "Canyons," a song propelled by a grimy, heavy rock riff. In keeping with *NUT*'s theme, the song's lyrics are about the canyon-like physiology of the brain, and explore the parallels between humans developing unique identities and the way nature evolves and is shaped over time. Elsewhere, *NUT*'s lyrics and sound delve into KT's own personal evolution, and the way our selves evolve through the repetition of behaviors and our responses to life experiences.

"Private Eyes" grew out of Tunstall's brush with the vampiric downside of fame, while "Three," summarizes the arc of the trilogy, inspired by a journal practice where she would write multiple entries on one topic from the different perspectives of mind, body and soul.

"I loved this ring-fencing of theme — I found it comforting and freeing at the same time," she says. "I'd always visualized that when you come to make an album where you can write about anything, it can actually be more interesting if you're limited; you have to dig down, dig deeper. I gave myself very clear parameters of what I was writing about."

Tunstall also gave stylistic boundaries to *NUT*'s music. She envisioned the songs based on patterns, and the idea of pattern learning and repetition. "I wanted to try and emulate the way that our brain works with what you are hearing. I knew from the outset that the album would center around rhythm." Drawing on her love of West African grooves—she particularly admires the music of Guitarist Ali Farka Touré, Fela Kuti, Mali band Tinarawen, and Musical Director and Drummer Tony Allen—Tunstall focused on music with straightforward riffs and grooves. The bustling, beatheavy "Synapse" and the urgency, synth-driven "I Am the Pilot" in particular burst with explosive rhythms.

To Produce *NUT*, Tunstall enlisted Martin Terefe, one of her very close personal friends and longtime musical collaborators; in fact, he co-wrote her 2005 global hit "Other Side of the World" and has appeared on nearly every one of her studio albums. "We're the perfect co-writing match," she says. "We've always loved working together, but I'd never actually made a record with Martin Producing. On every other album I've made, I am in the room 16 hours a day, overseeing every single part, every sound. He's probably the only person I know that I would be able to allow to work on one of my records without me being there!"

In the end, not only did Terefe Produce *NUT*, but he enlisted other Musicians, including Sneaker Pimps co-founder Liam Howe and Razorlight Drummer Andy Burrows, to replicate and build on Tunstall's laptop demos. "Martin and I know each other so well and have such a great musical communication system, that he knows what I'm going to like—and he knows what I'm going to not like," Tunstall says. "He would always give me a heads up on what he was doing, and tell me to have a listen and see what I thought if anything he was adding was a little bit more out there. So basically, he would allow me to brace myself if he'd done anything mad."

Tunstall's instinct to let him steer the project was entirely correct. NUT is an eclectic album that seamlessly weaves together disparate styles—the '80s new wave throwback "Demigod" segues into the meditative Americana of "All The Time," while the propulsive "Out of Touch" is brisk poprock with stacked vocal harmonies and perforated beats—and emphasizes Tunstall's melodic and composition strengths.

"On my part, it required an enormous amount of letting go and relaxing my grip on my own music," she says. "And I think the pandemic totally encouraged this shift, into me letting go of some of that control and allowing a much more collaborative experience to take place. Basically, when your world is turned upside down, you get perspective of what's important and what's not."

In the last decade, Tunstall has become used to upheaval. In fact, when she started the trilogy, she was in a much different place—figuratively and literally. In 2015, Tunstall sold everything she owned and moved to California, a bold move that came at the end of a three-year period full of change and transitions. "I remembered feeling like I can either patch over the cracks, and try and make everything as similar and familiar as possible, or I could burn the shit to the ground and start again," she says of that time. "And I went for the latter. It was a great decision."

Among other things, she studied film composition with the Sundance Institute after needing a break from touring and recording. Making new albums was the furthest thing from her mind—a big change for someone who asked for a piano at the age of 4 and decided she wanted to be a SingerSongwriter by age 15. "I really had no idea what the future held at that point of personal change," she says. "And it was certainly not a sure thing that I was going to keep making records. I'd ended up miserable after pursuing everything I'd wanted. I didn't want to make music, I didn't want to make records, I didn't want to be in the public eye. It was the closest I've known to a personal breakdown, really."

The trilogy that emerged in the wake of this period also came with challenges. "The first record, *KIN*, was absolutely a Phoenix out of the ashes," Tunstall says. "It was the result of a profound personal shift, finding my feet again after some really hard shit." Among other things, Tunstall's father died—an event that made her realize she was unhappy in her marriage and led to divorce. More challenges awaited her upon the release of 2018's *WAX*. "Halfway through the tour for *WAX*, I completely lost hearing in my left ear, which never returned," she says. "I lost an extremely important physical part of my body during a record about the body."

Tunstall was understandably wary about what might happen while making her 'mind' record, *NUT*. And of course, it came in the form of a global pandemic. However, now that the trilogy is complete, she has the perspective to appreciate the solace and healing she experienced as the songs unfolded. "I did not expect to be essentially documenting such an intense personal journey," she says. "When I started, it was more observational fascination with the subject matter and a sense of personal interest. I did not predict how visceral an experience it would be making this music about myself. It became the audio accompaniment to a deeply transformative period of my life. It's the soundtrack to me creating a new version of myself."

In light of this personal evolution, it's no wonder that *NUT* is such a step forward. However, it's clear Tunstall relished leaving her comfort zone and trying something new. "I made *NUT* completely differently from any other record I have ever made," Tunstall says. "But I wanted to do things differently. The reason I pursued music was because I had to avoid a repetitive job. I need to feel a constant sense of exploration in life. And I've realized you can absolutely fall into repetition even in this job. And so for *NUT*, I was like, 'Come on, let's do what we said we were going to do. Let's push into something new.' What's most important is that I made an exciting, meaningful record that I love, and had fun while I was doing it."