

# Jason McNiff

## *Rain Dries Your Eyes*

Tombola  
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*"McNiff's quiet, intimate, fragile-sounding vocals draw you into his world – an almost timeless place, through which he drifts, a romantic loner, a dreamer, at home with the blues." Time Out*

*Rain Dries Your Eyes* is a new double CD retrospective anthology of the best of singer-songwriter **Jason McNiff**. Spanning more than 15 years and including brand new tracks, previously unreleased material and songs from his six studio albums, the collection showcases his fragile, wistful and timeless blend of blues and folk. A modern day troubadour, **McNiff** started recording in the early 00s, but he has a sound that harks back to the great folk rock pioneers of the late 60s/early 70s.

**Jason McNiff** is a London based Yorkshireman of Irish and Polish descent. With nods to Bob Dylan and the Band, Leonard Cohen, Paul Simon, Bert Jansch, John Renbourn and Wizz Jones, McNiff is often touted as one of the UK's most precious musical treasures – a great songwriter and top-notch finger-style guitarist. His 2011 album, *April Cruel* (Fledg'ling Records) was nominated for best album in the alt-country category at the Independent Music Awards in the US.

*Off The Rails* was McNiff's 2000 debut, which was produced by **Andy Allen** of the **Hank Dogs** (who was one time bass player with the **Sex Pistols** for their "Silly Thing" single). The album was recorded in a closing down tape studio in Wandsworth and engineered by Alun Lane, and also featured Geoff Spence on drums, who McNiff met whilst studying at Nottingham University; *"Nearly 30 years my senior, he'd lived through an era I could only imagine through records... We did many gigs together, but it was the endless hours spent talking and thinking about music that was the most valuable time."*

The 2003 follow-up, *Nobody's Son*, maintained McNiff's signature sound but included contributions from members of both the **Hank Dogs** and South London country rockers **Grand Drive**. The title track has been reworked for this collection and features guest vocals from London-based Italian folk singer **Emma Tricca**, with whom Jason as collaborated as the duo **Tricca McNiff** (whose album *Southern Star* was released in 2016).

For his third album *Another Man* (Wonky Atlas in 2006), McNiff wanted to have a band so he put together a crack team of **Steve Brooks** (Ahab, Danny & the Champs) on drums, **Graham Knight** (Simple Kid, Ahab, Orphan Colours) on bass, and **Andy Drummond** on Organ. It was recorded live in the room of another soon-to-be-closed studio, this time in Bath, Somerset.

In 2008, McNiff was anthologised on *In My Time*, which featured material from all three of his previous albums, along with a few newly recorded tracks. The album also featured Simon J Alpin of Willard Grant Conspiracy on lap steel on "Pilgrim Soul".

*April Cruel*, his 2011 album, was McNiff's first to be recorded at Bark Studios in Walthamstow by Brian O'Shaughnessey – he has since returned many times. The track "Kissing the Wind" features Fryda, an instrumental duo from Italy.

His 2014 album *God Knows Why We Dream* features the song "Heart of A Poet" on which he plays a hand-made Vicente Sanchis A 2 Spanish guitar, which he used in his job as resident flamenco guitarist at a Spanish restaurant in Waterloo.

The new songs on the album include "Cairo" (which is a new song from an old idea using a Rob Armstrong guitar in open D tuning), "Sun Comes Up", "Marry Him" (featuring Garry Smith on Dobro) and "Sicily" (written after touring round Sicily with his Dad as the tour manager).

For all his talent for lyricism and effortlessness as a songwriter, McNiff has also shown his adeptness as a musician by way of cover versions, as demonstrated by the exclusive download-only version of Jackson C Frank's "Blues Run the Game" with the digital release. Weaving inspiration from classic American songsmiths with strong roots in English folk, McNiff serves up astutely arranged ballads imbued with warmth and beautifully crafted imagery.

*"One of the UK's best kept secrets." - Mojo 4\*s*

*"Dark songs of drunkenness and murder!" - The Independent 4\*s*

*"A troubadour and one of the best singer/songwriters we have in this country." - Morning Star*

*"Not just a good songwriter, a truly great one." - Americana UK 9/10*

*"The nearest thing out there to Bob Dylan and the Band." - Sean Rowley BBC Radio London*

*Album of the Year for 2nd album Nobody's Son as voted for by the staff at Americana UK*

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