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**Biography 2024**

Six million album sales. Five top five studio albums, two of which hit the UK number one. World tours in front of 3.3 million people. Over 1 billion streams. A 2007 single, *This Is The Life*, that went to number one in ten countries. Seventeen years of continued international success, in which she has resolutely and unfailingly gone her own way.

And 2020 saw her best album yet.

The Human Demands, produced by Jim Abbiss of Arctic Monkeys / Kasabian fame, reconnects Macdonald with her alternative roots, and her ability to write classic songs that sound like they have always existed, albeit with a new, Bruce Springsteen-like widescreen grandeur and ambition that suits her powerful, resonant contralto. The album also takes on the kind of heavy themes most of us have to deal with sooner or later: falling in love, burning bridges, facing depression, growing up. All this from an acoustic guitar-playing indie rocker who only ever wanted to share a bill with Travis at Scotland’s T In The Park festival.

“Seeing Fran Healy on stage with Travis at T In The Park, in 2000 when I was 13, made me want to do this in the first place,” says Amy Macdonald, as she reflects on the way the new album has reconnected her with that magic youthful moment of excitement and discovery. “I loved the way he told stories; I loved the way he communicated not only through the music but also by connecting with the audience. In 2006 I went back and told my friend I would be up there myself one day. A year later I was playing T In The Park, and the following year I was on the main stage. It all came from that moment. The strange thing is, it now feels like I’ve gone back to that moment. Everything feels brand new, all over again.”

When Macdonald emerged with her debut album This Is The Life in 2007 she was a breath of fresh air: a no-nonsense Scottish singer, unafraid to speak her mind, whose love of the Libertines, the Arctic Monkeys and Travis, her ability to write catchy, relatable pop rock songs culled from experience, and her refusal to sell herself on image or sexuality made for a powerful teenage role model. Signed to Universal at 18, she duly went on to have a very big career indeed, but three albums in she felt that, by her own admission, “I was painting by numbers. There was nothing new anymore and it had become a day job; the only job I had ever known. Now I’ve come back with songs I can take meaning from, and I’m working with people who are as excited as I am. It has changed everything.”

A few other things have changed along the way. She got married, signed with Ignition management — home to Oasis, Noel Gallagher and Catfish & the Bottlemen — and left Universal for Infectious / BMG. She hooked up with Jim Abbiss, producer of classic records by her childhood heroes Kasabian and the Arctic Monkeys, and found herself in a position of starting all over again in the best possible way.

“I have so many memories of dancing in nightclubs to songs that Jim produced,” she says of Abbiss. “His track record speaks for itself, but luckily I also liked him the moment I met him. We started recording earlier this year, we had some decent momentum… And then everything stopped. Like everyone else we did nothing for the next three months, so when we finally could get back to it everyone was thrilled to be working again and you can hear that on the record. I said to Jim that whatever happens with the album, however amazing his back catalogue, none of us will have an experience as memorable as this again.”

At the new album’s lyrical centrepiece is *The Human Demands*, a radio friendly, 80s tinged rock classic about the challenges life inevitably brings, and the fact that, however much it may feel otherwise, we are not alone.

“A lot of the themes on this album are about getting older, which seems ridiculous given I’m only in my early 30s,” Macdonald explains. “But I signed my first record contract at 18, which feels like a lifetime ago, and on a personal level I’m at the stage in life where parents are getting on, friends have faced depression to the point of not wanting to be here anymore, and everyone has had ups and downs whatever their background. *The Human Demands* felt like the perfect centrepiece for the album because I’m saying: It’s OK to feel a bit crap, and it’s OK to talk about it as well.”

As a message to friends of Amy’s who struggle to get out of bed in the morning that they won’t feel that way forever, *Strong Again* follows a similar theme. “And it started out as a simple acoustic demo but Jim turned it into the dystopian, Muse-like Bond theme it is now,” she says of the song. Elsewhere, the strident *Bridges* celebrates the singer’s tendency to get into scrapes through never shying away from a strong opinion — “I get annoyed with musical artists who sit on the fence because they’re so concerned about everyone having a good opinion of them” — while upbeat rocker *The Hudson* was inspired by the stories Amy’s dad used to tell her about going to New York with her mum in the 70s.

“It was dangerous back then, definitely not a tourist spot, which made me think about their relationship,” she says of *The Hudson*. “Growing up, Mum and Dad were at each other’s throats, but then so were the parents of everyone I knew. You go through your life with someone you shout and swear at the whole time, but if you ever parted you’d reminisce about them constantly. It’s a similar theme to [2007 debut single] *Mr Rock & Roll*, asking whether or not you have made the right choices in life.”

Macdonald is not one for love songs, but marriage does strange things to people and *Fire*, which opens the album, is a heartfelt homage to her husband and one of the most romantic pieces she has ever sung. “It was the first song I wrote after getting married, in Las Vegas of all places,” she says. “I was co-writing with a friend Matt Jones, and we had the song finished in half an hour. I was so happy at the time, just married, that I came up with something that isn’t typical of me at all. I said to my husband: this is the only song you’ll ever get out of me, so enjoy it.”

All of this comes from someone who has weathered fifteen years of major success in music while remaining her own woman. “When you are starting out, nothing can prepare you for it,” she says of early fame. “Nobody sits you down and explains how you will feel when you are thrust in front of people who will give you their opinion, who tell you if they think you’re crap. I was doing my own thing, playing little gigs and open mic nights, and the next thing I knew I had a number one album in all these countries. I was so young that I didn’t analyse it much and just thought the whole thing was a laugh. It’s only when you get older that you start thinking about it all.”

Now, all these years later, Amy Macdonald is back where she began: with an album that captures the essence of who she is. The fact that it was made in the midst of global pandemic only adds to her feeling that this is a fresh start.

“At first I was worried about releasing music in a pandemic because let’s face it, there are more important things going on,” she concludes. “But then I thought: it’s different, it’s new, it’s interesting, and usually I would be flying around Europe, doing radio sessions and interviews. Now I can’t do that, which also makes me feel like we’re back at the beginning because I didn’t do those things then either. I’m back to making music I like and just putting it out in a pure way. It has given me a new love for what I do, all over again.”

Deutsche kurz:

Amy Macdonald hat in ihrer 17-jährigen Karriere beeindruckende Erfolge erzielt: sechs Millionen verkaufte Alben, fünf Top-5-Studioalben, von denen zwei die Nummer eins in Großbritannien erreichten, und über eine Milliarde Streams. Ihr 2007er Hit "This Is The Life" erreichte in zehn Ländern Platz eins. 2020 veröffentlichte sie ihr bisher bestes Album, "The Human Demands", produziert von Jim Abbiss, bekannt durch seine Arbeit mit den Arctic Monkeys und Kasabian.

"The Human Demands" verbindet Macdonalds alternative Wurzeln mit einer neuen, Bruce Springsteen-ähnlichen Größe und behandelt Themen wie Liebe, Brücken abbrechen, Depressionen und Erwachsenwerden. Macdonald erinnert sich daran, wie sie 2000 bei einem Konzert von Travis inspiriert wurde, selbst Musikerin zu werden. Ihr Debütalbum "This Is The Life" aus dem Jahr 2007 machte sie zu einem Vorbild für Jugendliche, da sie sich weigerte, sich über ihr Image oder ihre Sexualität zu verkaufen.

Nach drei Alben fühlte sie sich jedoch kreativ ausgelaugt und beschloss, sich neu zu orientieren. Sie heiratete, wechselte das Management und das Label und arbeitete erneut mit Jim Abbiss zusammen. Die Produktion des neuen Albums wurde durch die Pandemie unterbrochen, was die Arbeit daran zu einer einzigartigen Erfahrung machte.

Das titelgebende Lied "The Human Demands" thematisiert die Herausforderungen des Lebens und vermittelt, dass man nicht allein ist. Weitere Lieder wie "Strong Again" und "Bridges" behandeln ähnliche Themen. "The Hudson" wurde von den Geschichten inspiriert, die ihr Vater über New York erzählte, und "Fire" ist eine Hommage an ihren Ehemann.

Macdonald reflektiert über ihre Karriere und den Umgang mit Ruhm. Sie betont, dass sie jetzt wieder Musik macht, die sie liebt, und dass die Pandemie ihr das Gefühl gegeben hat, einen Neuanfang zu erleben.