

THE FRETLESS - BIO - 2021

Four ferocious players, masterful composition, and a genre-bending sound — Juno award-winning *The Fretless* is a Canadian quartet that has firmly taken its place on the map to a progressive form of “trad”.

A supergroup of celebrated solo artists, *The Fretless* has been creating a singular and signature sound that dares to expand the idea of what a string music quartet can be — transforming fiddle tunes and folk melodies into intricate, beautiful, high-energy arrangements that have quickly gained a dedicated following and accolades from around the world. Within what appears to be a simple and classical construct — two fiddles, a viola, and a cello — *The Fretless* has created a sound that is distinctly rich, multi-layered, and uniquely percussive. This tonal quality is pushing traditional music to new heights, producing a completely fresh approach to Folk music.

Starting with their debut album in 2012, *The Fretless* had a breakout year winning *Instrumental Album of the Year* at the Western Canadian Music Awards and *Instrumental Group of the Year* and *Ensemble of the Year* at the Canadian Folk Music Awards (CFMA). Their self-titled follow-up album, “The Fretless”, took home Ensemble of the Year at the CMFA’s and features the tune “Waving To Ryan”, which is approaching two million Spotify plays. In 2015, they released “Bird’s Nest”, an album that solidified them as a force among the world’s roots music scene and earned them a 2017 Juno award for *Instrumental Album of The Year*. Recorded in a converted barn, straight to tape with a live audience in upstate New York, in 2018 they released “Live from the Art Farm”, an expanded rhythmic, harmonic, and stylistic exploration of the many folk genres they play. This album not only won them a CFMA for *Best Instrumental Album* but earned them a second Juno nomination.

Since the band’s first album in 2012, *The Fretless* has been successfully touring at home in Canada, as well as globally throughout Australia, North and Central America, and six European tours. From intimate back rooms and rowdy dance halls to some of the worlds most iconic and prestigious stages, *The Fretless* has had the honor of performing for a wild variety of audiences. Select credits include the Cologne Philharmonic, Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra Hall, Shetland Folk Festival, Festival Internacional Cervantino, two sold-out shows at Celtic Connections, as well as sharing the bill with Canadian fiddle legend, Natalie McMaster, for Canada Scene at the National Arts Centre. A *Fretless* show is infectious, dynamic, and impressively relentless. They not only deliver expert musicianship, a soulful and electrifying performance but always invite the audience to feel the passion they hold for their music.

As they look toward 2021, *The Fretless* is eager to release their most ambitious recording to date — “Open House” — a 10 track guest singer collaboration, featuring an astounding list of powerhouse vocalists that will absolutely solidify *The Fretless* as an ever-evolving, truly transcendent group.

Outreach and inspiring the next generation of string players is very much a part of *The Fretless*’ ethos. They continue to support numerous fiddle camps, masterclass’ and workshops around the world, not only as instructors but as mentors. Over the past few years, they have connected with notable organizations such as the Calgary Youth Orchestra and the Luxembourg Youth Orchestra, creating and performing full orchestral arrangements of *Fretless* tunes, as well as working toward a series of professional symphony presentations.

The Fretless is Trent Freeman (Fiddle/Viola), Karrnel Sawitsky (Fiddle/Viola), Ben Plotnick (Fiddle/Viola), and Eric Wright (Cello).