



## FORTUNATE ONES – THAT WAS YOU AND ME

Out of a period of isolation, introspection, and honesty, emerges *That Was You and Me*, the new album from **Fortunate Ones**.

With lush harmonies rising out of warm acoustic sounds, *That Was You and Me* finds Fortunate Ones reflecting on life, loss, grief, and hard times, and ultimately choosing love.

"Every part of our lives was changing. It was a big transition period, personally and professionally," says Catherine Allan, one half of the St. John's, Newfoundland duo, of the period in which these songs were written. After touring their second album, *Hold Fast*, the two craved time to retreat, reconnect, and create. Some of that time was granted on the heels of surgery.

"I had a tumour removed from my hand in the summer of 2019," explains Andrew James O'Brien, the duo's other half. Recovery left him unable to play guitar in any serious way - and slow days at home had him rethinking what a career in music would or could be. Instead, a job at the picturesque Inn by Mallard Cottage found O'Brien up early day after day, working the front desk. That workaday life led to one of the album's stand out songs. "Day to Day" was born in the very morning routine it describes. "One morning, the sun is not up," O'Brien remembers. "Crawl downstairs half awake. I'm literally frying eggs and out of nowhere - this song comes. I don't have a guitar. I've never written a song like this before, full melody and verses in my head. Immediately words are coming, 'alarm clock howls/I find my legs/crawl down the stairs/and fry my eggs.' I'm writing this standing over the stove on my phone in complete silence. I'm thinking, holy shit, the whole song is done, end to end in my head. Never happened to me before in my life."

The song talks of finding meaning in the day to day - and finding meaning is an overarching theme on this album.

O'Brien and Allan decided "that the only way to move forward was to infuse our work with as much meaning as possible," Allan says, "so that whatever happened, we would feel full from it, and hopefully then people will feel that too."

O'Brien agrees. "My goal was to write unwaveringly meaningful work that was incredibly personal and didn't hold back."

The result is an album stacked with songs about family, love, and finding one's place. These songs are richly peopled and deeply personal - and at the same time, totally relatable. "It was intentional," O'Brien said. "It wasn't like, let's write songs because we need to fill a record. Each song is its own story and its own living thing."

"Clarity" is an anxious heart's search for answers. "You're Still Here" details a long, hard year and offers hope for the future. And "It's Worth It (for Leo)" is a beautiful tribute to O'Brien's father, who is unwell. O'Brien was thinking about what he most wanted his father to know. "You've created a legacy of people that are honored and proud to come from you," O'Brien says, "and that, looking back on your life, if you can think of one positive moment in a sea of experience, then it was worth being alive." It's a hard song to sing, O'Brien admits, and the album version is a single take that had O'Brien - and producer Joshua Van Tassel - in tears. "It is not edited at all. You can hear that I'm sniffly in the last verse. It was a really profound moment. We had to keep it."



There's a warm intimacy not only in the song writing, but in the recording. Inspired by co-writing sessions for *Hold Fast*, Allan took up writing in Logic, recording nuggets and fragments and building on them. For O'Brien's part, though he's a dedicated "pen and paper" writer, he too began recording fragments. "Well, that guitar riff I've been dying to play every time I pick up a guitar, instead of just playing in the air, why don't I set up a track record it." And though co-writes were a regular part of the band's practice for earlier albums, *That Was You and Me* features Allan and O'Brien exclusively.

The pair spent a pandemic summer in a little "salt box house by the sea," says Allan, writing, refining, and recording songs they'd send digitally to Van Tassel in Toronto. O'Brien credits a feeling of true freedom - freedom from the pressure of the music business delivered by a pandemic that stopped touring on a worldwide scale, freedom from his own sense of what he ought to be doing, and freedom to simply follow his own curiosity. "I led with my heart," O'Brien says. "And I didn't let industry pressure or popular pressure affect my creative decisions."

For Allan, the experience of writing this album during a period of intense change, and then recording it during the isolation of a global pandemic, allowed her to examine a fundamental question of existence. "What is your life when everything else is stripped away and you have nothing else?"

At the end, there's love. And *That Was You and Me*.

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## ABOUT FORTUNATE ONES

Fortunate Ones is a contemporary folk duo from Newfoundland. Celebrated for their harmony-entwined songs of hope, resilience, and the human condition and their joyfully disarming live shows, they have toured relentlessly, bringing their open-hearted performances to thousands of people across North America and beyond.

Catherine and Andrew have been busy since the release of their debut album *The Bliss* in 2015 - thousands of miles, hundreds of shows, award winning albums and scores of fans have all been hallmarks of the success the duo has experienced since their humble beginnings in St. John's. *The Bliss* was nominated for a Juno Award and landed two #1 singles on CBC Radio 2's Top 20.

On their sophomore album *Hold Fast*, the title track hit #1 on the CBC Music Top 20 Chart. The album also took home three Music NL Awards in 2018, was nominated for four East Coast Music Awards, and the 2019 Canadian Folk Music Award for Vocal Group of the Year. To date, songs from *Hold Fast* have over 16 million streams on Spotify.

Fortunate Ones released *That Was You and Me* in 2022 and embarked on the Anchor's Up Tour with The Once and Old Man Luedecke across Canada. The single "Heavy Heart" was nominated for the Single of the Year Award at the 2023 Canadian Folk Music Award and the album was nominated at the Junos in the Contemporary Roots Album category. In May 2023, the album won the ECMA for Folk Recording of the Year.