



A true preserver of the spirit of folk music, 2022 **Juno**-winning **Maria Dunn** ([www.mariadunn.com](http://www.mariadunn.com)) is often compared to **Woody Guthrie** for her keen social awareness and her melodic, unvarnished songs about the lives of working people.

Thirteen years as a volunteer DJ in community radio (1987-2000) encouraged Maria to listen widely to the master songwriters, singers and instrumentalists of folk and roots music. Discovering their recordings and becoming an avid fan and supporter of live music in her community, she absorbed the important messages of compassion and human struggle that have always been central to the writings of folk artists from **Buffy Ste. Marie** to **Hazel Dickens**, from **Bill Broonzy** to **Dick Gaughan**.

By the time she began writing her own music in the mid-90s, Maria was learning to draw deeply on the folk tradition of storytelling through song to honour “ordinary” people, past and present.

In keeping with **Pete Seeger**'s words (1994), “*The key to the future of the world is finding the optimistic stories and letting them be known*”, her 2016 recording **Gathering** (2017 **Juno Nominee**; 2016 **Edmonton Music Prize Winner**), celebrates the love of family, community, and humanity that fires our actions to make the world a better place.

*Maria Dunn's **Joyful Banner Blazing** elevates our humanism...its meditative scope full of sacrifice, familiar echoes & joy will remind you we'll always get to the other side... – **Fish Griwkowsky, Edmonton Journal (January 2021)***

With her seventh album, 2022 Juno-winning **Joyful Banner Blazing** (2021), Maria continues to draw upon stories of resilience, grace, gratitude, solidarity and hope. Produced by **Shannon Johnson** (of Juno-winning band **The McDades**), **Joyful Banner Blazing** was recorded & mixed by **Terry Tran** at **The Audio Department** (Edmonton), with additional engineering by **Scott Franchuk** at **Riverdale Recorders** (Edmonton), and mastered by **João Carvalho, Carvalho Mastering** (Toronto). **Jeff Sylvester** at **Cut+Paste** (Edmonton) designed the artwork. Distributed by **Believe** (through **Outside Music Distribution**).

Musicians: Maria Dunn (lead vocal, accordion, guitar), Shannon Johnson (violin), **Solon McDade** (upright bass), **Jeremiah McDade** (whistles, saxophone, guitar), **Audrey Ochoa** (trombone), **Joel Gray** (trumpet), **Curtis Appleton** (banjo, harmonies), **Jeff Bradshaw** (pedal steel), **Andy Hillhouse** (acoustic guitar), **Byron Myhre** (acoustic guitar), **Campbell Wallace** (highland bagpipes) with harmony vocals from **Debbie Houle, Dana Wylie** and **Dawn Cross**.

In substance, the 10 songs on **Joyful Banner Blazing** honour working people (*Heart in Hand, Waltzing with the Angels*), unsung heroes (*Joyful Banner Blazing*), universal connections in family life (*Don't Think You Are Forgotten, Ontario Song*), childhood resilience (*Secondhand Skates*), gratitude (*Love Carries Me, Declan's Song*) and humility (*Beautiful Fools*). And for the first time in her 22-year recording career, Maria offers a cover tune: her take on **Ron Hynes'** *From Dublin With Love*.

In style, each musical arrangement serves the story, from the exuberant Celtic opening (*Joyful Banner Blazing*) to the pedal steel enhanced country waltz (*Waltzing With The Angels*), from a banjo and horn-fueled travelling groove (*Ontario Song*) to the closing a *cappella* sing along (*Beautiful Fools*). Songs arranged by Maria Dunn, Shannon Johnson, Solon McDade with Jeremiah McDade and Andy Hillhouse (as indicated in liner notes).

**Joyful Banner Blazing** topped many 2021 year-end lists compiled by Folk DJs and folk music journalists: #6 on Alberta-wide CKUA Radio's Top 100 albums; #2 on **Penguin Eggs Critics' Poll** Albums of the Year 2021 (Roots Music Canada); 5 months (Jan–May 2021) on the **Folk Alliance International Folk Chart**, peaking at #7 in March 2021.

- *Seven albums in, and Maria Dunn here cements her reputation as a songwriter and performer of the greatest integrity...works of art that are both subtle and heartfelt. – **Living Tradition, UK***
- *...one of our most important and vital songwriters... – **Penguin Eggs Magazine***
- *An arrestingly powerful singer-songwriter who writes great historical and social commentary. - **WFMT Chicago***
- *... remarkable singer-songwriter, think of her as a distaff Woody Guthrie. - **Edmonton Sun***
- *... this is history come alive. Her lyrics are sharp and poignant... - **Sunday Edition, CBC Radio***
- *She's assured, strong, and her versatile voice carries her songs straight to the head and heart. - **Sing Out!*** ..!2

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In addition to her work as a songwriter and musician, Maria has researched, developed and performs four multimedia people's history shows (weaving original songs and oral history interviews) in collaboration with videographer **Don Bouzek**: *On The River* (with Indigenous women's trio **Asani**), *Packingtown*, *GWG: Piece by Piece* (with historian **Catherine C. Cole**), and *Troublemakers*.

Edmonton-based, Maria tours (solo, ensemble) to theatres, folk clubs, conferences and festivals across North America and in Europe. **Bravo TV**, **BBC Radio**, **CBC Radio** and Alberta's **CKUA Radio** have all featured her music. Her songs are published in **Sing Out!** and **Penguin Eggs** magazines, **Rise Again** songbook (2015) and recorded by international artists, including **Niamh Parsons**, **The Outside Track** and **Bob Bossin**. Maria has shared the stage to perform collaborative concerts w/ Andy Irvine (Planxty, Patrick Street), Si Kahn, Cindy Church, Cara Luft, Joan Besen (Prairie Oyster), Kat Danser, Dana Wylie, Kaia Kater, John Wort Hannam, Joe Jencks, Laura Vinson, The McDades, Asani & more.

### Highlights

Awards / Nominations:

**2022 JUNO Winner** – Traditional Roots Album of the Year (**Joyful Banner Blazing**);  
2022 Western Canadian Music Awards: Nominee - Roots Artist of the Year (**Joyful Banner Blazing**)  
**2017 JUNO nominee** – Traditional Roots Album of the Year (**Gathering**);  
2017 Western Canadian Music Awards: Nominee - Roots Solo Artist of the Year (**Gathering**)  
**2016 Edmonton Music Prize – Winner (Gathering)**;  
2016 Independent Music Awards – Social Action Song (**Malala** from **Gathering**);  
2013 Canadian Folk Music Awards nominee – Solo Artist of the Year (**Piece By Piece**);  
2013 Edmonton Music Prize – shortlisted (**Piece By Piece**);  
2009 Canadian Folk Music Awards nominee – Solo Artist of the Year (**The Peddler**);  
2009 USA Songwriting Competition Honourable Mention (**The Peddler**);  
**2002 Juno nominee** - Roots/Traditional Solo (**For A Song**);  
1999 Prairie Music nominee - Outstanding Songwriter (**From Where I Stand**)

International Tours: 2022 UK/Netherlands Tour (rescheduled from Fall 2020 due to COVID); 2017 UK Tour (Maria Dunn Duo); 2017 NY State (Triple Bill: **Joe Jencks**, **Si Kahn** & Dunn); 2015 UK/Ireland Tour (Maria Dunn Duo); 2011 Netherlands (Double Bill with **The McDades**); 2010 Netherlands (Maria Dunn Trio)

Festivals: **Main Stage:** Edmonton (AB); Lunenburg (NS); Summerfolk (ON); Mission (BC); Stanfest (NS); Frostbite (YK); Canmore (AB); 2014 PEI 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; 2008 Celtic Connections (Scotland); 2006 Smithsonian Folk Life (DC, USA), **Side Stage:** Salmon Arm, Vancouver Island, Vancouver (BC); Calgary, Bear Creek (AB); Winnipeg (MB); Mariposa, Ottawa (ON)  
TV: **The Carol Project** (Bravo TV); **Huron Carole** 2002, Jubilee, Calgary (CMT); **Voice of America** (Washington, DC)  
Radio Features: **BBC Radio Scotland**, **Travelling Folk** (Scotland); **WFMT Folkstage** (Chicago); **Folkscene** (Los Angeles); **Bound For Glory** (Ithaca, NY); **KVMR** (Nevada City, CA); **CBC Canada Live**; **CBC Sunday Edition** (Canada), **CKUA** (AB) etc.

Discography:

- 2021 Joyful Banner Blazing (May 2020 release delayed due to COVID19 restrictions)
- 2016 Gathering
- 2012 Piece By Piece
- 2008 The Peddler
- 2006 Alberta: Wild Roses, Northern Lights (Smithsonian Folkways)
- 2004 We Were Good People
- 2004 Songs of the Christmas Carol Project (Brass Monkey Productions)
- 2001 For A Song
- 1998 From Where I Stand

Other: Host annual *Women of Folkways* concerts Winter Roots (2011 – 2016); Pacific Northwest Labour History (2008, 2014); 2001 Artist-in-Residence, Edmonton Labour Council; Song Commissions: Writers Fête (2021); Friends of Medicare (2019); Alberta Labour History Institute (2019); Public Interest Alberta (2009, 2014);; Alberta Federation of Labour 100th Anniversary (2012); CBC Radio "Canada Reads" (2007); Volunteer – Canadian Artists for Reconciliation and Education (2021 ongoing)

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