

# Rory McLeod info sheet, publicity sources, biography, Links and Information.

Rory McLeod

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Website: [www.rorymcleod.com](http://www.rorymcleod.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rory.mcleod.73>

Twitter: @rorytalkative

Youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&v=RO\\_xCvYGtxY&hl=en-GB&feature=related](https://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&v=RO_xCvYGtxY&hl=en-GB&feature=related)

Farewell Welfare - Live Performance W9 Elgin Estate Video 1987

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RO\\_xCvYGtxY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RO_xCvYGtxY)

Rory McLeod & the Familiar Strangers - Applause

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRtxYcunu3c>

- **GENRE: STYLE: DESCRIPTION:**

Rhythmic storyteller, multi-instrumentalist, ...telling unpalatable truths about broken hearts...social injustice...in songs, that are percussive, bold, lyrical, deeply personal ...and have an unexpected edge to them, accompanied by spoons, harmonica, guitar, trombone and-tap-dancing shoes.



- **SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

<http://www.rorymcleod.com/biog.htm>

**RORY McLEOD**

**An ex-circus clown and fire eater.  
is a one-man-soul-band, and poet.**

**He has a natural troubadour's talent for weaving magical,  
musical, storytelling spells accompanied by his own bizarre  
solo orchestra of distinctive instruments.**

**The spoons, finger-cymbals, bandorea, Djembe-drum,  
harmonica, guitar, trombone and-tap-dancing shoes  
accompany the**

**"rich, raw, deep and resonant" voice of this "singular and  
liberating performer."**

**"Expect the unexpected."**

**McLEOD**

is a musical Gypsy, his eccentric melodies are infused with influences from Flamenco to Country blues, through to Celtic, East European and Calypso rhythms creating a style of music and songwriting that has been described as

*"Intimate, revealing, political and powerful."*

*"When he sings his songs he will take you on a journey with him."*

*"Poetry and dance-stories with verve, sharpness, humour and warmth about people and for people."*

*"Great songs to dance to, infectious rhythms, flying harmonica!"*

*"We saw the ubiquitous Rory Mcleod on stage wowing the crowd as if it were his living room... everyone was dancing... Then some hours later that night we heard Rory singing more of his stories around a campfire, listening... chatting and joining in with everyone else on his trombone, spoons and harmonica."*



- **COLLABORATIONS**

<http://www.rorymcleod.com/collab.htm>

An ex-circus clown and fire eater in an Azteca Mexican Circus, Rory has played harmonica and guitar with ANI DI FRANCO, MICHELLE SHOCKED, MICHAEL FRANTI, TOWNES VAN ZANDT, JOE STRUMMER , THE POISON GIRLS, BUTCH HANCOCK, with the West-African guitarist ALI FARKE-TOURE and TAJ MAHAL; and Madagascan group TARIKA. He's enjoyed creative collaborations with HASSAN ERRAJI, KATHRYN TICKEL and PAUL RODDEN- virtuosos, respectively, of the Moroccan Oud, the Northumbrian pipes and the Irish banjo.

- **AWARDS.**

**BEST LIVE ACT: BBC RADIO 2 FOLK AWARDS 2002**

**TEXAS HARMONICA CHAMPION 1981.**

**EDINBURGH FESTIVAL STREET BUSKER OF THE YEAR in 1985.**



- **WRITING and COMPOSTIONS**

Rory has written songs and music for a BBC radio documentary - an oral history project about East London's 400 year old Spitalfields fruit and vegetable market.

Also written songs and music commissioned by 'SHIFTWORK', a Scottish dance and circus theatre based company devising a psycho-comedy theatre-show based on a traditional puppet play called Punch and Judy.

- Commissioned to composed the theme music/tune for tv animation series 'creature comforts'. 2003.

Has appeared on Channel 4. arts programme 'After Image'.  
and Welsh T.V. 'Television Ballads'.

In 1996 Rory was the BBC's Pick of The Week for his "Invoking The Spirits", a recording of a personal musical journey through Zimbabwe, searching for the Mbira, (an African thumb Piano), playing and talking with African musicians for the BBC's Radio 4.

Rory was also commissioned to write songs and music for Scottish based, *Tabularasa Dance Company*, A dance-theatre piece for Children called '*HUFF PUFF and AWAY*' about Wind and Breath. The songs and music appear with other songs on his CD '*Songs for Big Little People*'.

Guest Appearance:

" Woody Lives"

(with various Artists, Dick Gaughan, Rab Noakes, Bert Jansch)

On Black Crow records.

A benefit for Huntingdons disease and a tribute album to Woody Guthrie.

Rory has played with *Diego Laverde Rojas* -Columbian string harpist and *BJ Cole* on Pedal steel guitar, whose' distinctive textures and colours have complimented Rory's tap-dancing rhythms and syncopated guitar style.

Rory also has performed his songs in concerts with a horn section, doubling up on bass and keyboards with *Bob Morgan* (clarinet, alto sax, keyboards) and *Richard Sadler* (baritone sax, soprano sax and bass), with Rory also playing Trombone as part of a 'roaming' horn section at festivals,(*The Fire-*

**Walkers) playing Rory's tunes in the middle of fields, outside bars, tents and *'blowing along'* as a horn section with whoever would invite them to.**

**Rory has made up and illustrated some short stories to read his own children.**

**Rory was commissioned with other poets and songwriters to compose songs for a musical show about *Hadrians Wall*, called *'All along The Wall'*.**

**Rory doesn't only compose songs but also instrumentals and tunes - *'Lassoing the Bees'* was composed on harmonica and bass harmonica for a 'country dance' celebrating the yearly cycle of the honeybee and the patterns and structures of their 'dances'. The country dance was created with and for the people who lived on Amat Estate in Sutherland, Scottish Highlands.**

**Rory composed an *'Apple Wassailing Song'* for a family wassailing ceremony in *'Crailing Community Orchard'* in The Scottish Borders...**

**of which Rory is one of several volunteer workers pruning and tending to the grounds.**

**The song names many of the apple and pear varieties in the orchard.**

**It is to be sung around many varieties of Apple trees with kids, families, Volunteers joining in a procession and dance, rattling pots and pans.**

**'You Can't Just Let Nature Run Wild' was a song made for and performed with young people in Langholm for the Langham Moorland Project - a song which Rory recently also played at**

**COP26 for the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics event Expressing  
the Earth.**

**Rory was commissioned to make 8 songs about Canal Life  
2019-20 for 'The Grit Of Life  
For *The Widgeon* Canal Boat theatre**



**TOUR DATES**

[www.rorymcleod.com](http://www.rorymcleod.com)

**INTERVIEWS.**

<http://www.rorymcleod.com/interviews/interviews.htm>

**Road Diaries from Palestine-Israel to Zimbabwe  
From Shetland Isles to China**

<http://www.rorymcleod.com/diaries/list.htm>

**Videos**

**Getting Used to Quarantine. (The Best In Us)**

Rory cobbled together a video in 2020 to go with his song using old photos and footage He took on his phone during lockdown.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=p96HAecJbEo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p96HAecJbEo)

London Kisses- Rough Collage of Photos Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUBsB2T2SSM>

- **DISCOGRAPHY**

RORY HAS 11 ALBUMS ON TALKATIVE MUSIC AVAILABLE  
ONLINE at [www.rorymcleod.com](http://www.rorymcleod.com)

['GUSTO!' 2019.](#)

[The Glee and The Spark. 2016](#)

[Swings and Roundabouts \(2010\)](#)

[Brave Faces \(2005\)](#)

[Songs for big little people \(2007\)](#)

[Mouth to Mouth \(2000\) DOUBLE CD](#)

[Lullabies for Big Babies \(1997\)](#)

[Travelling Home \(1992\)](#)

[Footsteps and Heartbeats \(1989\)](#)

[Kicking The Sawdust \(1986\)](#)

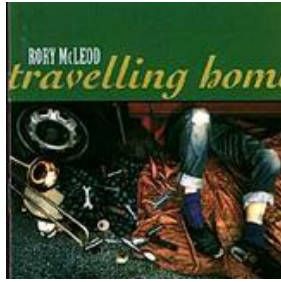
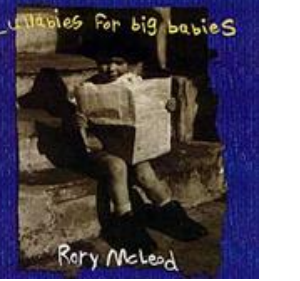
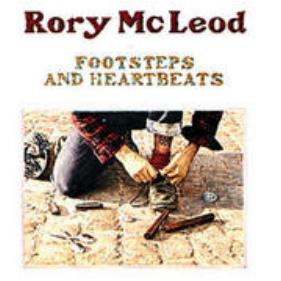
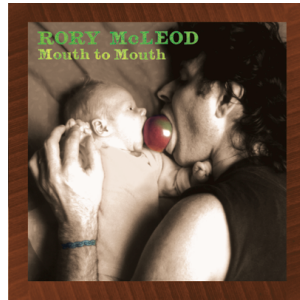
DOUBLE CD

[Angry Love \(1985\)](#)

**DOWNLOADS AVAILABLE SHOP**

[http://www.talkativemusic.co.uk/1-2-3-Music-Store/  
process.php?pname=ShopfrontProcess-Start](http://www.talkativemusic.co.uk/1-2-3-Music-Store/process.php?pname=ShopfrontProcess-Start)





**SOUNDCLOUD.****Tasters**

<https://soundcloud.com/talkativemusic/sets/radio-air-play-to-publicise>

<https://soundcloud.com/talkativemusic/tracks>

**LINK TO REVIEWS:**

<http://www.rorymcleod.com/reviews.htm>

**MORE** Reviews from VENUES below.

*“Rory McLeod ...so original it's nigh impossible to compare him with anyone else...An awe inspiring live performer who, you discover when you repay his craft with the scrutiny it deserves, writes quite brilliant songs.” - fRoots Magazine*

- **PHOTOS**

**High resolution and Lower resolution (suitable for use in social media) image.**

[www.rorymcleod.com/gallery](http://www.rorymcleod.com/gallery)

[http://www.rorymcleod.com/images/RoryharpinmouthspoonsIMG\\_0254\\_000.jpg](http://www.rorymcleod.com/images/RoryharpinmouthspoonsIMG_0254_000.jpg)



## RORY McLEOD - REVIEWS.

**"....informal, soul baring, colourful observations, cracking tunes, sharp narratives"**

**"a hugely endearing yet provocative album that synthesises McLeod's long history disrespecting conformist styles and artificial genres."**

**"intriguing amalgam of moods concocted here- whenever Morgan puts lips to clarinet you think of Klezmer, every pluck of the Rojas harp takes it into Latino territory and McLeod's songs acquire the robes of the chameleon."**

**"Plenty of glee here and no little spark either."**

**COLIN IRWIN.**

**"Rory McLeod just gets it. His songs are stories that are as old as the hills but refer to the experience of everyone in the room.**

**And he's cool too, but not so cool that he can't write a song about his grandmother....which is a song about my grandmother and probably everyone in the room's grandmother too....universal, affectionate and.... a rare gift this.... completely unsentimental.**

**We worried that the stage at the Hippodrome wouldn't be big enough...and sometimes**

**the energy in the polemic and the music and the dancing filled the space to bursting.**

**But it was a shapeshifter of a gig and moments later a shared intimacy and another story wrapped the room in a warm bear hug.**

**We had that feeling at the end of the night that we'd met before, somewhere on another road.**

**Rory sometimes has the backing of Diego, Bob and Richard, fabulous musicians all.**

**The Familiar Strangers. Great name for a band."**

Paula Tod - The Hippodrome,

Eyemouth. [www.eyemouthhippodrome.org](http://www.eyemouthhippodrome.org)

**"...made me want to throw away my inhibitions and take to the road: McLeod seemed a kind of Jack Kerouac armed with string instruments and harmonica."**

**"...the visual impact of the man could never be captured on audio disc."what glorious energy there – the energy to glow in the dark. "**

**"Bob Morgan positively dazzles on clarinet and saxophone."**

**"...you have the spark there to light your fire, this four piece combo will fill you with glee and ensure that the fire will not go out in a hurry."**

DAI WOOSMAN

**"Rory McLeod and the Familiar Strangers are indeed familiar and strange at the same time. Every element of their appearance at Hebden Folk Roots was a joy - for organisers as well as audience."**

Dave Boardman

Artistic Director Hebden Bridge Folk Roots

**"The Familiar Strangers are big favourites at Purbeck Valley Folk Festival.**

**Rory McLeod himself is an amazingly charismatic songwriter.**

**Add the band and there's an upbeat sound backing Rory's robust songs about real people and real life. Icing on the cake is when other performers see Rory at the festival, he is called up on stage to join in on a number.**

**Magic!"**

Paul Burke, Purbeck Valley Folk Festival.

**"....a unique intriguing fusion between confessional singer songwriter, world music influences, and jazzy swing, different from anything else around."**

**"a fresh unique alternative take on life that he highlights through his entertaining exuberant songs"**

**"*'You Can't Just Let Nature Run Wild'*, a thoughtful song which I personally relate to as a trained Geographer and Ecologist."**

BELVOIREMAN

**"The Familiar Strangers really add meat to the bones of Rory's great material"**

Jonti Willis Roots Music Club Doncaster.

**To see these guys is to become an instant convert."**

**"The double bass provided a constant backbone"**

Phil Laverton Rye Festival of Music and Arts Festival

**"...a whole new light. Wonderful stuff!"**

Lotte. Prince Albert. Stroud.

Rory McLeod is a

".... Rhythmic storyteller-Soul-Singing-Tap-dancing-Poet,Guitar-Picking,One-Man-Dance-Band"

Rory is a generous, hardworking, lyrical performer - whose mission is to carve new roads, to "keep memory alive", and to take his audience on a journey - emotionally, physically and musically on large and small stages, living rooms, tents, and streets.

Apart from performing his own songs Rory is also well known for taking part in workshops and round robin set-ups with other musicians- crossing many cultural and musical borders. Rory is always up for both participating and or leading improvised sessions.

As a community artist for some 30 years, musician, poet and storyteller Rory has toured and performed for community groups in all kinds of venues from village halls, schools, care homes, tents, art centres, community gardens, arts festivals, literature and poetry festivals, libraries and in the middle of fields.

As of January 30th 2017 He has become a new associate member of The National Rural Touring Forum and also a registered performing artist on the Night Out Scheme.

## **PREVIOUS FESTIVALS.**

**In recent years Rory has played at countless festivals all over the world including:**

**Glastonbury,**

**Sidmouth International Folk and Dance Festival,**

**Cambridge Folk Festival -Towersea,**

**Musicport, Wickham, Shrewsbury, Beautiful Days, Brampton, Banbury, Hull, England, Saint Ives Festival, Wadebridge, Cornwall, SolFest Cumbria, UK, Purbeck Folk Festival Dorset, Rebellion Punk Festival in Blackpool.**  
**Bromsgrove Folk Festival, Larmer Tree Festival, Ely Folk Festival Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Celtic Connections Glasgow, Monaive Festival, Belladrum Tartan Heart - Orkney, Shetland, Scotland,**  
**Saint Donats Story-Telling-Festival Wales.**  
**Womad festivals-UK and-Canada,**  
**Belfast, Shetland, Cork, Galway Arts Festival - Ireland**  
**Tonda-Denmark,**  
**Kaustinen Festival-Finland,**  
**Kerrville Festival - Texas USA,**  
**Woodford Festival, Australia**  
**National Folk Festival, Byron Bay Blues and Roots Festival - Blue Mountains Blues and Roots Festival-Australia,**  
**Oviedo-Asturius, Barcelona, Madrid Spain, Bilbao, Onate, Basque Country,**  
**Oerial Festival-Terchelling-Holland,**  
**Auckland Festival - New Zealand,**  
**Bourges, Ris Oranges, Souffle Rennes Brittany,**  
**Transmusicales France,**  
**Vancouver, Brandon, Edmonton, Calgary, Mission, Mariposa, Whitehorse-Frostbite-Festival-Yukon, Hillside Festival and Winnipeg Music Festivals - Canada ....**  
 ....to name but a few.

- **ARTISTS LABEL LOGO**



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