



"Songs about broken vows, impoverished families and impending death aren't supposed to be pretty. Just don't tell Freakwater." – **CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

"Bean and Irwin gave so generously of themselves that style and substance became virtually indistinguishable." – **PITCHFORK**

FREAKWATER

SCHEHERAZADE

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2016

If you stop talking you'll die. The storied namesake of Freakwater's new album, *Scheherazade*, told elaborate, interwoven tales of depth and pathos, because her life literally depended on it. These songs, like *Scheherazade's* "A Thousand And One Nights," are stories within stories, spinning into other stories, asking more than they answer. They lie between resignation and resolve, between desolate and luminous. There are unnamed protagonists, unknown destinations, unknowable resolutions. There are the mysteries of the living and the mysteries of the dead; they lay between resignation and resolve, between desolate and luminous. These stories are neither pretty nor not pretty, just honest, literate, and intensively inhabited by their narrators.

Anchored around the fragile and compelling harmonies of **Janet Bean and Catherine Irwin** and the subdued, oracular bass playing of **Dave Gay**, the utterly unique sound is distilled from many sources. There's the elemental ache and loss in the soil and limestone of Kentucky, the songs and struggles that passed over and over the Atlantic from the British Isles centuries ago. There's the energy and freedom in the ratty punk clubs of **Louisville and Chicago** at a time when rules and formalities were, meant to be ignored. **At once bluegrass, blues, folk, and country, it is also none of them.** Freakwater is not dealing in historical artifacts. Rather, it is a product of two voices intertwined with one another for over three decades. This sound might be **best summarized as Appalachian soul.**

Scheherazade is **Freakwater's eighth album, and first in over 10 years.** Like the heroine of *The Arabian Nights*, their longevity sometimes depends on leaving their audience hanging. It is a release of familiarity as much as it is one of change, one that is distinctly different, but never loses sight of what it is that makes them Freakwater.

In 2014, Irwin and Bean (along with longtime collaborator Jim Elkington) convened for a mini-tour celebrating the 20th anniversary of their landmark album *Feels Like The Third Time*. Inspired by a rekindled musical spark, the two wrote songs throughout that summer and in the fall got together for two months of rehearsing and six days of recording. *Scheherazade* was recorded and mixed at LaLa Land Studio in Louisville, Kentucky with **Kevin Ratterman**, *My Morning Jacket's* longtime engineer. It was

the first time in the band's long career that they recorded an album outside of Chicago. The slower pace of Louisville – what Janet calls "the Kentucky crawl" – and an extended cast of talented local musicians proved perfect elements for developing their new songs. Freakwater's amazing collaborators on *Scheherazade* include **Elkington (Tweedy, Horse's Ha, Eleventh Dream Day)** on pedal steel and mandola, **Evan Patterson (Young Widows, Jaye Jayle)** on electric guitars, **Warren Ellis (Dirty Three, Nick Cave)** on fiddle and alto flute, **Sarah Balliet (Murder By Death)** on cello, and **Morgan Geer (Drunken Prayer)** on electric guitar.

With its generations old deep harmonies and horrors, "What the People Want," the album's eerie opening track, captures a preternatural ability to meld the alluring and the gruesome, the beauty in the murder ballad. Driven by banjo, Moog, and Ellis's fiddle, the song recasts traditional narratives to include contemporary atrocities. The premiere single, "The Asp and the Albatross," might lull the listener with its **Laurel Canyon vibe**, but further down the beach Cleopatra and the Ancient Mariner are swinging side by side sipping poison. "Take Me with You" is a song that could have been sung 300 years ago, and could be sung 300 years from now. It's a straight ahead Appalachian death-trip – **a simple, sparse melodic treasure.** Pure Freakwater.

Stretching themselves in the studio as never before, Freakwater provides longtime listeners with thrilling surprises. "Down Will Come Baby" is an uneasy lullaby fueled by Patterson's wah-wah guitar and Catherine's perfectly wacked banjo line. It's soulful, psychedelic and exciting, more Haight than Holler... "Velveteen Matador," with its buoyant and bright guitars (**think Dusty Springfield meets Buffalo Springfield, at the grooviest intersection of folk-rock and Memphis country-soul**) is a cautionary tale of a darkness to come – in a card game or in life. The secular doom-gospel of "Number One with a Bullet" is, in that way only Freakwater can pull off, **simultaneously uplifting and devastating.**

New blood from a familiar vein. *Scheherazade*, the new album from Freakwater, is here and ready to spin for a thousand and one nights.

For press needs, contact: Josh Zanger at josh@bloodshotrecords.com

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Freakwater *Scheherazade* Personnel:

Catherine Ann Irwin
vocals, guitar, banjo

Janet Beveridge Bean
vocals, guitar, mandola

Warren Ellis
alto flute, violin

James Elkington
pedal steel, mandola

David Wayne Gay
bass

Jonathan Glen Wood
moog, electric guitar, vocals

Morgan Geer
electric guitar

Evan Patterson
wah-wah guitar

Anna Krippenstapel
violin, vocals

Sarah Balliet
cello

Neal Argabright
drums, pump organ

Anthony Fossaluzza
organ, electric piano

2016 Album Release Tour Dates:

- 2/10 The Ark - Ann Arbor, MI
- 2/11 Beachland Tavern - Cleveland, OH
- 2/12 The Drake - Toronto, ON
- 2/13 The Dock - Ithaca, NY
- 2/14 Great Scott - Allston, MA
- 2/16 The Bell House - Brooklyn, NY
- 2/17 Boot & Saddle - Philadelphia, PA
- 2/18 DC9 - Washington, DC
- 2/19 Club Café - Pittsburgh, PA
- 2/20 Zanzabar - Louisville, KY
- 2/21 Riot Room - Kansas City, MO
- 2/23 Walnut Room - Denver, CO
- 2/25 The State Room - Salt Lake City, UT
- 2/27 Tractor Tavern - Seattle, WA
- 2/28 Mississippi Studio - Portland, OR
- 3/1 The Chapel - San Francisco, CA
- 3/2 The Echo - Los Angeles, CA
- 3/3 Valley Bar - Phoenix, AZ
- 3/4 The Flycatcher - Tucson, AZ
- 3/5 Low Spirits - Albuquerque, NM
- 3/7 Kessler Theater - Dallas, TX
- 3/8 The Sidewinder - Austin, TX
- 3/9 Gasa Gasa - New Orleans, LA
- 3/10 Barking Legs Theater - Chattanooga, TN
- 3/11 Grey Eagle - Asheville, NC
- 3/12 Eddie's Attic - Decatur, GA
- 3/13 The Basement - Nashville, TN
- 3/14 Off Broadway - St. Louis, MO
- 3/16 Cedar Cultural Center - Minneapolis, MN
- 3/18 The Hideout - Chicago, IL

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