

## evalyn parry bio

Innovative, award-winning songwriter and performance artist evalyn parry takes her audience on an uncommon musical and poetic trip, spinning a web of ideas that travel from the 19th century women's emancipation movement to 21st century corporate sponsorship; from social history to contemporary social comment. Accompanying herself on an eclectic collection of instruments which include guitar, water bottle, shruti box, bicycle, loop pedal and electronic effects, Parry's outspoken, witty and personal performances are inspired by a powerful vision of political activism. With her catchy indie-folk songs and stories, she uncovers little-known female characters from history, speaks out on pressing environmental issues, and locates the personal inside of contemporary, political issues of gender equity and consumer culture.

parry has released four critically acclaimed CDs of music and spoken word and her work has been widely broadcast, commissioned and anthologized. Recent performance highlights include Guelph's renown **Hillside Festival**, **The Lincoln Centre Out of Doors Festival** in New York City, **The Yukon International Storytelling Festival**, **The Calgary International Spokenword Festival**, **Toronto Pride**, and many more. Her most recent project, SPIN - a musical work about women and bicycles - premiered at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto, where it sold out its two week run. She is a founding member of the Independent Aunties, with whom she has co-authored and performed five plays including the Dora-nominated *Breakfast* and the multiple-award-winning, fringe favorite *Clean Irene & Dirty Maxine*. Education is a vital part of her artistic practice, and Parry has worked as a guest artist at various high schools and universities across Canada and the USA over the last decade.

## SPIN: the CD

evalyn parry's SPIN CD is a modern concept record – a collection of catchy, hook infused songs that have at their centre, both as inspiration and instrument, one thing: the bicycle. By taking a bike – an object that hasn't changed its function or form in over 100 years – and fusing it to modern technology, we have created a contemporary instrument that is completely unique. You've never heard a record like SPIN.

Innovative Canadian songwriter, poet and theatre artist **evalyn parry** takes her listeners on a journey through the last 150 years – tracing the bike's evolution and underlining it's significance as a catalyst of social change. From 19th century women's emancipation to 21st century consumer culture; from social history to contemporary social comment, SPIN (which functions as a soundtrack to the live theatrical production of the same name) is build around the bicycle-as-instrument, creating a completely distinctive foundation for parry's award-winning songwriting.

SPIN features **Evalyn Parry** on electric and acoustic guitars and lead vocals, **Brad Hart** on the 1972 CCM Galaxie Bicycle , bicycle pump and vocals, and Anna Friz on bike lights, imbirra, harmonica, accordian, melodica, leatherman and vocals

The 1972 CCM Galaxie model is hooked up to contact microphones, a loop station and reverb/delay pedal; played by percussionist Brad Hart, it becomes an evocative and versatile instrument. At times recalling the "junkyard soundscapes" of Tom Waits, there are moments on the record where you are not sure *what* you are listening to. The

natural spring reverb of the vinyl bike seat creates an amazing “bass drum”; tunes spokes play melodies; fenders, pedals and frame all make wildly different sounds when played with hands, brushes or sticks; not to mention the otherworldly sound of a violin bow on the spokes, or the amplified buzz of flashing bicycle lights, as played by sound artist Anna Friz.

On some songs, like the catchy “She Rides” and the anthemic “Progress”, the bike functions as a driving rhythm section, pushing guitars and voices forward. The bicycle also creates sinewy, hypnotic rhythms, heard on the trip-hop influenced “World of Spin” as well as on the record’s centerpiece, the 12-minute groove-heavy, radio play styled “Ballad of Annie Londonderry”. On this song, vintage microphones and turn of the century jingles collide with modern rhythm and melody to create a unique sonic hybrid – over which evalyn spins an unforgettable tale of perseverance and adventure: Annie Londonderry, the first woman to ride around the world on a bicycle, in 1894.

SPIN is a collaboration between songwriter evalyn parry, musicians Brad Hart and Anna Friz and producer Don Kerr. Don brings the variety and scope of his music career to the production of SPIN. As a member of the legendary Canadian art-rock band The Rheostatics, Don is well versed in the world of progressive and conceptual music. The same spirit that lies behind that group’s seminal “Group of Seven” record can be found here – the mixing of the modern and the historical, the layering of melody, rhythm and soundscape to create a unique experience for the listener. But Don also has a keen ear for a great songwriter and song – as illustrated by his longstanding association with Ron Sexsmith – and it is with this skill that Don has helped to sculpt the great, contagious songs found at the centre of SPIN. His skill as a producer is clearly evident on this record – along with co-producers parry and Hart, Don Kerr has created deep sonic landscapes that are dense and fascinating, drawing the listener in and building that interest as the songs progress. Melodies and sounds from one song creep into another, giving the record the cohesion of a classic concept album – while still being a collection of great stand-alone songs.

Blessed with “**an ethereally beautiful singing voice**” (NOW Magazine), parry is a captivating performer, who’s outspoken, personal and political performances are inspired by a powerful vision of social activism, spinning language and ideas as deftly as Hart spins, plucks and bows the wheels of the bicycle. SPIN is full of brand new ideas and sounds, unlike any record that evalyn and her collaborators have made before. It is totally unique, and well worth taking for a ride.

## **SPIN: THE THEATRICAL PRODUCTION**

The theatrical production of SPIN premiered at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto in March 2011, where it sold out its two week run.

“part theatre, part musical gig, part spoken word poetry & part documentary...whatever it is, **it is brilliant.**” Toronto Star

Innovative, award-winning Toronto artist **evalyn parry** takes her audience on an uncommon theatrical and musical journey in **SPIN**, her tour-de-force performance celebrating the Bicycle as muse, musical instrument and agent of social change.

**“..a welcome breath of fresh air....Parry makes something beautiful out of taking life into your own hands...”** The Globe & Mail

Inspired in part by the incredible true tale of Annie Londonderry - the first woman to ride around the world on a bicycle in 1894 - parry spins a web of stories which travel from 19th century women's emancipation to 21st century consumer culture, peeling back layers of history to ultimately reveal a profoundly contemporary and personal heart to her performance.

“this magnetic artist and her winning production team invest the work with such intelligence and playfulness, it's hard not to be charmed.” (NOW Magazine)

parry's “co-star”, a vintage bicycle, is suspended in a mechanic's stand on stage. Backed by her unusual and highly accomplished band, the bike is played by percussionist Brad Hart, using brushes on the fenders, bows on the spokes and drum sticks on a variety of tuned bells, conjures an astonishing array of sounds with this iron horse, while, on the other side of the stage sound artist Anna Friz plays instruments from the more traditional (accordion, harmonica) to the even more unusual (amplified buzz from flashing bike lights), creating a richly textured and utterly unique sonic accompaniment to Parry's songs and monologues.

Projections by acclaimed designer Beth Kates add a captivating visual layer to SPIN, which directed by award-winning theatre artist Ruth Madoc-Jones.