

APRIL VERCH

Fiddler, singer, and stepdancer April Verch knows how relevant an old tune can be. She was raised surrounded by living, breathing roots music—her father’s country band rehearsing; the lively music at church and at community dances; the tunes she rocked out to win fiddle competitions. She thought every little girl learned to stepdance at the age of three and fiddle at the age of six. She knew nothing else and decided early on that she wanted to be a professional musician.

She took that leap, and for over two decades has been recording and captivating audiences worldwide, exploring new and nuanced places each step of the way. On February 17, 2017, she released *The April Verch Anthology* (Slab Town Records), an 18-track collection celebrating her life’s work. Hand-picked by Verch, the songs on this compilation offer an enchanting mix of regional Canadian, American old-time, bluegrass, country and Americana tracks.

The April Verch Anthology is a testament to the many chapters in Verch’s musical journey. Moving from exuberant stepdancer to fiddle wunderkind and silver-voiced singer; from upstart prodigy to mature and reflective songwriter, interpreter, and storyteller. The compilation is an excursion through Verch’s 1998-2015 recordings, featuring tunes and songs dear to Verch as well as a healthy dose of fan favorites and two newly recorded tracks. “Through this anthology, I am reminded of the inspirations with which I began and of the hopes I hold for the future. I take a moment to reflect and to celebrate,” says Verch.

While Verch is perhaps best known for playing traditional fiddle styles from her native Ottawa Valley, Canada, her performances extend into old-time American and Appalachian styles and far beyond, for a well-rounded tour-de-force of North Americana sounds. Verch and her fellow trio members pare down their arrangements, highlighting the simple pleasures of upright bass, guitar, clawhammer banjo, voices, fiddle, and stepping in intimate conversation. At the heart lie Verch’s delicate voice, energetic footwork, and stunning playing. Sometimes she sings, steps and fiddles all at once, with apparent ease and precision. Verch is - as they say - a triple threat in performance, her live show a beautiful companion to her music: versatile, robust, and masterfully executed.

Verch began her full time touring career in 2000 and has performed around the world, including festival, theatre and performing arts centre appearances in Canada, USA, China, Australia, United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Spain, Czech Republic and the United Arab Emirates. She also presents workshops, master classes, and lectures as part of her tours and at selected music camps.

Verch won’t be the one to tell you about her championship titles, nominations, and awards, or the fact that she was one of 6 fiddlers who represented the Canadian fiddle tradition to the world at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, as part of a segment called “Fiddle Nation”. Instead, in speaking with her, you’ll hear about how passionate she is about sharing her music; in small gatherings in remote communities in Iqaluit, to large prestigious concert halls like Mozartsal in Vienna.

Even as she plays with the tradition she inherited, Verch keeps the community-fired celebratory side of her music at the forefront, honing a keen awareness of how to engage contemporary listeners. It’s why Rolling Stone cited her “One of the 12 best things we saw at MerleFest in 2016.”

“Just as contemporary bluegrass has Alison Krauss as an ambassador, the Ottawa Valley has April Verch,” said NPR’s Marco Werman on “The World.” And Verch never forgets the roots of her music, that connection to the people out there in the audience, on the dance floor, to the community sparked by a good song. “It’s about joining together to celebrate everyday life, through music. We’re all in this together.”