

Laura Cortese & Bert Ruymbeek

Time flies and details are easily altered in our memories. Laura Cortese & Bert Ruymbeek capture the atmosphere of meaningful moments and turn them into memorable tales of sound. Sometimes with lyrics, sometimes instrumental.

Like storytellers, Laura & Bert display an intimate dialogue in their music. They reflect on people, places and stories that have an impact on their lives. Their music covers a wide emotional range, like a conversation effortlessly flowing with associations

During the 2020 lockdowns what was once a casual passtime turned into a serious creative expression. Thanks to Merodefestival they got the opportunity to work on the music and turn it into a concert program.

Laura Cortese has built a distinguished career as an Americana fiddler, songwriter and vocalist. She grew up in San Francisco, CA and moved to Boston, MA to study at Berklee College of Music, immersing herself in the city's vibrant indie music scene and enjoying a busy touring-and-studio career. In 2018 she moved to Ghent Belgium. She tours internationally with her band, Laura Cortese & the Dance Cards, is co-founder of the Miles of Music Camp in New Hampshire, The Bright Lights Sessions in Ghent and is highly in demand as a collaborator.

She might best be described as a sonic magpie: a curious and resourceful adventurer traversing great distances, collecting melodies and rhythms that glitter like jewels in the sun. Driven by the gravitational pull of human connection, her tendency towards exploration and collaboration have led her into countless niches, each providing its own unique feather with which to decorate her distinct and ever-evolving sound. But all of these explorations have one thing in common: the power of strings. This may seem limiting to some. To her, it is anything but. "Strings are at the core of what I do," she says. "Genre is secondary to that palate."

Bert Ruymbeek is an accordion player from Ghent whose groovy energy and lyrical playing is influenced by Northern-European folk music. He studied accordion with Eddy Flecijn and was influenced by folk bands from all over Europe in Music Club 'tEy in Belsele, his home town. Thanks to Mustafa Avsar and the jamsessions in Ghent's 'Muzikantenhuis' he started playing in several bands touring in Europe, China & Australia.

He tours internationally with WÖR, a quintet that re-interpretes 18th century music from Belgium and regularly takes part in several projects.