

'Around the world in 80 plays' for Bert Jansch

Preface: The Journey begins ...

For Bert Jansch 
Around the world in 80 plays

80plays.bertjanschfoundation.org



The Bert Jansch Foundation invites you to celebrate

Bert's 75th
and the launch of
Around the world in 80 plays

Wednesday 5 December 2018: 6.00pm–8.00pm

Venue: Yamaha Music London,
152-160 Wardour Street, Soho, London W1F 8YA

RSVP: Please confirm your attendance as soon as possible at
geraldine@bertjanschfoundation.org or 07971 818262

From the time of his (would have been) 75th birthday, for the next five years, musicians around the globe had the opportunity of saluting the legendary guitarist and singer-songwriter, Bert Jansch

in an extraordinary and imaginative collaboration between the Bert Jansch Foundation and Yamaha Music, a Yamaha TransAcoustic guitar, from Bert's most favoured LL series would set off across continents passing from artist to artist, enabling young and old, long-time fans and new devotees, to connect with the man and his music.

Each nominated artist had the opportunity to say something about what Bert meant to them and to play something for Bert. It might be a piece they had specially created, or something of their own repertoire that they felt resonated with Bert's ecological and social concerns – or indeed their own interpretation of a Bert piece. Each musician signed the guitar, wrote in the accompanying Travel Diary and then sent their video to the Bert Jansch Foundation, before choosing the next artist to receive the travelling guitar.

The response was so eager and enthusiastic from so many artists in locations around the world that the one guitar quickly grew to four setting off on this amazing Odyssey. And a fifth guitar joined in in April 2018. Bert's light is clearly still riding high – as evidenced by these amazing artists and their tributes that you can now see on the dedicated website.

<https://80plays.bertjanschfoundation.org/>

Launching 'Around the world in 80 plays' at Bert Jansch 75th Birthday Event, 5 December 2018

Andrew Winton reports on the launch event

Friends, fans and fingerstylists joined the Bert Jansch Foundation on 5 December 2018, at the Yamaha Music Showroom in Soho, to celebrate what would have been Bert's 75th birthday and to launch the Foundation's guitar odyssey 'Around the world in 80 plays: For Bert Jansch'.

Foundation trustee **Karen Kidson**, the sister of Bert's late wife Loren, welcomed everyone, to the celebration, all of whom had been involved with the Foundation in some way. She said that in his anniversary year, 'this new project celebrates Bert's musical influence and spirit and creates fresh ripples of inspiration from Bert to wherever in the world.

'Once a video has been sent to the Foundation for its dedicated website, the guitar signed, and travel diary written up, the artist will choose the next artist on this musical journey. There is also an opportunity for the public to nominate a stopover. 'We don't yet know where it will go – and that's the thrill of it.'



Karen then got the event underway by introducing Bert's great friend and musical colleague, **Ralph McTell**. He talked about the times in the sixties when a guitar-less Bert had arrived in London. Incredibly, he didn't actually own a guitar at that stage and relied on friends to provide an instrument for him to play!

Ralph related how someone had lent Bert a guitar on which to record his first album in 1965, which covered both traditional and original material. He can be seen holding the guitar on the iconic blue cover. So, this album, an instant hit and still a favourite today, really did contain something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue.

Bernard Butler said that he had been delighted to receive the guitar from one of his heroes and the first contributor to the '80 Plays' project, The Smith's guitarist **Johnny Marr**. Bernard is well-known as a founder member of Suede and also had great success with singer David McAlmont.

He recalled many afternoons spent sharing tea and tunes with Bert and Loren at their home, evenings accompanying him on stage and playing on Bert's penultimate albums, 'Crimson Moon' and 'Edge Of A Dream'.



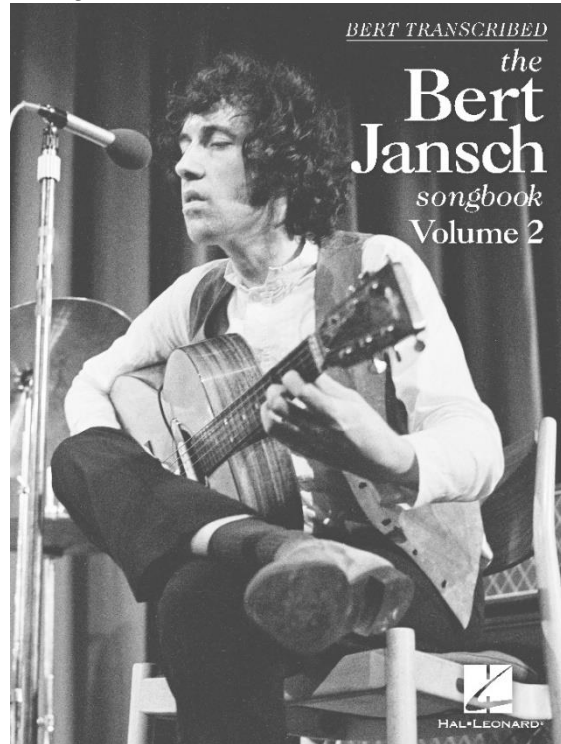
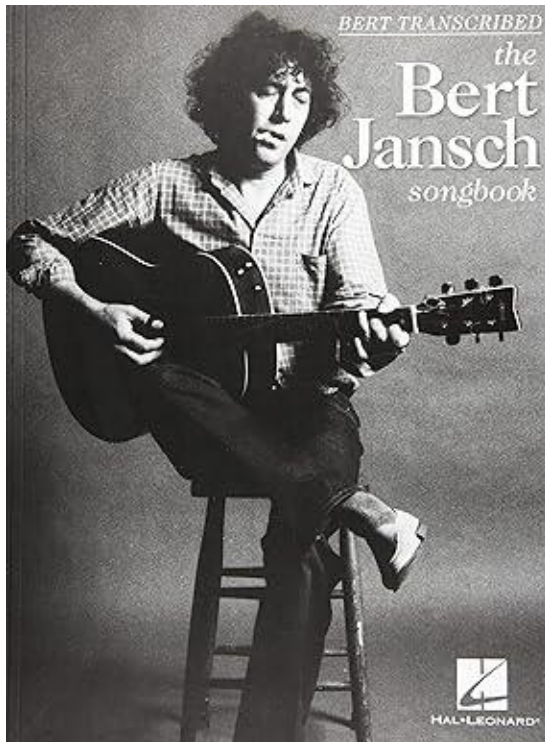
Bernard described how Yamaha had managed to add chorus and reverb effects into the TransAcoustic model, a new addition to its L series. 'Bert would have really loved this' he said.

Bert spent many years and albums playing with the legendary **Pentangle** – the folk-jazz-blues group he co-founded with John Renbourn. It was a real pleasure to hear the warm tribute paid by its singer **Jacqui McShee**. She spoke about their time together in Pentangle and how their initial musical meeting developed into a lasting friendship.



Other contributions came from **Louise Major** from Igloo Creative and **Tom Farncombe** of Hal Leonard Publishers. Louise showed us the '80 Plays' website that Igloo has developed to document the guitar travels. Videos of all the contributions will be posted here <https://80plays.bertjanschfoundation.org/>.

Tom presented ***Bert Transcribed***, a magnificent songbook published in August 2017 of 24 of Bert's most famous songs painstakingly decoded by a dedicated group of a dozen international Bert enthusiasts. Brought together by the Bert Jansch Foundation [now accompanied by Volume 2 published in 2023 with 30 more iconic songs]



Pictured above at the launch event are the 80 plays team, Karen Kidson Bert Jansch Foundation (BJF) Martin Adam (Yamaha) Louise Major (Igloo) and Geraldine Auerbach MBE (BJF)

The evening ended with **Jon Riley** and **Thomas Fairhurst**, the driving forces of the *Bert Transcribed* group, leading the audience through a lively rendition of 'Strolling Down the Highway'. A fitting finale to the celebrations, generously hosted by Yamaha at their Soho Music Store.



The guitars were there, one displaying the signatures of those who have already contributed to the project – Johnny Marr and Bernard Butler. To paraphrase a line from a well-known shark film, 'you're gonna need a bigger soundboard'. Report of launch event by Andrew Winton,



December 2018.

In this picture taken at the party we see Karen Kidson, Bernard Butler Beth Orton, Geraldine Auerbach and Serena Cross.

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After the speeches, the jamming and delicious snacks, the four guitars were squirrelled away to start their journeys. This amazing odyssey eventually numbered five travelling guitars:

**In this book , we relate the fascinating journey of each guitar:**

1. The '**Johnny**', so named for Johnny Marr who began the Odyssey travelled east to Europe.
2. The '**Wildcard**' guitar's journey was to the folkies of Ireland, Scotland and England.
3. The '**Beth**' guitar was named for Beth Orton. It travelled across England and Scotland
4. The '**Graham**' guitar was so named for Graham Coxon who took it way west to California.
5. When a guitar was needed for Steve Pilgrim, accompanied by Bert's Pentangle mate Danny Thompson – and no guitar was available, Yamaha kindly stepped in and a fifth TransAcoustic which was sent down to Paul Weller's BlackBarn Studio in Surrey where the guitar, henceforth known as the **Pilgrim**, started its journey south to north and east to west of the UK.

Some stopovers were with artist of international repute, such as **Richard Thompson** and **Tommy Emmanuel**. Some artists were revered in their own spheres, and some were newcomers to discovering the delights of the music of Bert Jansch.

The dedicated website for 80 plays is a font of endless discovery and enjoyment as you watch and listen to what all these amazing artists ranging from 17 to over 70 years old, delivered, and the sometimes-surprising things that they say about Bert. What is special for the Bert Jansch Foundation to see, is the number of young players, some only teenagers, hooked and inspired by the music of Bert Jansch. To see and hear them, and all the players, click here:

<https://80plays.bertjanschfoundation.org/>

### **About the Bert Jansch Foundation**

The Bert Jansch Foundation (BJF) was set up by Bert's family, friends and colleagues in November 2013 to assist aspiring acoustic musicians with educational and early career opportunities. With funds raised from charity concerts, workshops and donations, the Foundation has made grants helping many young artists along their musical journeys. BJF works both in partnership with music institutions such as Edinburgh Napier University, Renbourn Guitar Workshops, the English Folk Dance & Song Society at Cecil Sharp House, Goldsmiths College, Newcastle University, The Bert Jansch Studio and Young Somerset as well as individually with young artists including up and coming artist Chris Brain and Campbell Baum the instigator of the folk collective Broadside Hacks and the curator of the Moth Club events. These grants have been used for specialist training, travel, research, live performances, recording, marketing or other career essentials. The Foundation has also appointed and supported its own BJF Young Artists, Sam Grassie and Dariush Kanani. Dariush is BJF workshop leader and conducts Bert Jansch workshops, in person and online. He has curated online gigs which can be viewed on our Facebook page. Sam runs jam sessions for the Foundation and is compiling Bandcamp albums based on the 80-plays project. The Bert Jansch Foundation also brought together a dozen expert Bert Jansch transcribers from around the world and under the leadership of Jon Riley, created option transcriptions of 55 pieces for two outstanding volumes of 'Bert Transcribed – the Bert Jansch Songbook' which have been published by the prestigious music publishers Hal Leonard. Please visit [www.bertjanschfoundation.org](http://www.bertjanschfoundation.org) to find out more about the Foundation and learn how you can get involved or donate.