

TOM TOM MAGAZINE

A MAGAZINE ABOUT FEMALE DRUMMERS
THE COUNTRY ISSUE



The
COUNTRY
ISSUE

HAT FITZ
& CARA

BOBBYE
HALL

KITTY
DAISY &
LEWIS

LISA
PANKRATZ



THE RAINCOATS

WILLY MOON

BULLETPROOF
STOCKINGS

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◆◆◆◆ *That Big Ol'* ◆◆◆◆
BASS DRUM
Hat Fitz & Cara

BY KASEY PETERS
PHOTOS BY PAUL ARMOUR

Cara Robinson grew up in Bangor, a small seaside town in Northern Ireland, and became well-known in the Irish and UK scene as a blues singer with her bands Cara & The Robinsons and the Bad Habits. She's toured Europe and the US with Jamiroquai and Corinne Bailey-Rae, backed up Rihanna, toured Japan and opened for Beverley Knight.

However, these days Cara can be seen gigging behind a big ol' bass drum! A few years ago she upped sticks and moved to the other side of the world to join her love, fellow blues singer Hat Fitz, on a new musical and romantic adventure. For Cara, home is wherever she's making music. From Bangor to Cooch-araba — any small seaside town will do.

TOM TOM MAGAZINE: YOU NOW LIVE IN AUSTRALIA WITH YOUR HUSBAND FITZY AND ARE PART OF A DUO WITH HIM CALLED HAT

FITZ & CARA. WHEN DID PERCUSSION TURN INTO DRUM KIT PLAYING AND WAS THAT OUT OF LOVE, NECESSITY OR BOTH? CARA ROBINSON: Watching Fitz play was so inspiring, that I went home and searched for a kit, as I had this wild feeling that I wanted to have a go. I was lucky to be given an old kit from a friend and so I would say I starting playing the kit out of love. Oh and Fitz would not be seen dead with a cajón, ah ha ha!

HAT FITZ HAD ALREADY BEEN WELL KNOWN IN THE ROOTS AND BLUES SCENE IN AUSTRALIA AND BLUES HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF YOUR REPERTOIRE, WITH YOUR POWERFUL SOULFUL VOICE. I IMAGINE THE FORMATION OF YOUR DUO WAS FAIRLY SEAMLESS? FOR a while I just sat back and got my head down into playing the drums. That was enough for me. Then Fitz coaxed me out to sing more on my own and then to gether.



My washboard has a grill that's over 100 years old, with a native frame built around it. It's one sturdy washboard and takes no prisoners.

I have a 1965 Ludwig snare that has a lovely deep sound and I'm hoping to reunite my 1940s Slingerland Radio King floor tom from Ireland. Then I will have the supreme kit. My hi hats are from the '70s, with a nice full sound and a 12" and 16" crash. I use the 16" as my ride. My washboard has a grill that's over 100 years old, with a native frame built around it. It's one sturdy washboard and takes no prisoners.

YOUR OLDER DRUMS LOOK GREAT AND REALLY SUIT THE MUSIC YOU PLAY BOTH SONICALLY AND VISUALLY. WHERE DID YOU FIND THEM? We do a lot of travelling and keep our ears out always for a vintage seller. There are a few in Melbourne and Sydney — and they mostly sell from their homes, so you get to see what they're in the process of making when you go round, which is great.

THE COMBINATION OF YOUR VOICES IS LUSH AND SWAMPY, WITH HARMONIES FULL OF PATHOS. WERE YOU IMMEDIATELY EMBRACED BY FITZY'S FAN BASE? It was Northern Ireland taking more time, as they held Fitz as this international, fully acclaimed star and, in their eyes, I was just the local girl hitching a ride. Now, they're very supportive and we packed the last show in Belfast, which meant a lot to me.

DO YOU BRING AN IRISH SENSIBILITY TO HAT FITZ & CARA? WOULD YOU BLEND REELS AND JIGS INTO YOUR ROOTSY, OLD TIMEY SOUND? Fitz has inspired me to play more traditional style. We write all our own melodies with an Australian influence of traditional and hill country music. So it's our own wee stamp on it all really.

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR GEAR AND SET UP. This year I'm really excited to have my 1920s Ludwig kick drum back in Australia with me. It's a beauty and has a lot of warmth and room resonance.



FULL NAME: CARA ROBINSON
AGE: 39
HOMETOWN: BANGOR, NORTHERN IRELAND
LIVES IN: BOREEN POINT, QUEENSLAND
PAST BANDS: CARA & THE ROBINSONS (UK)
BAD HABITS (IRL).
CURRENT BANDS: HAT FITZ & CARA
DAY JOB: MUSIC
KIT SETUP: 1920'S LUDWIG KICK, 1940'S
SLINGERLAND RADIO KING FLOOR TOM,
1965 LUDWIG SNARE; TWO CRASH
CYMBALS (12" & 16"), HI HATS.