

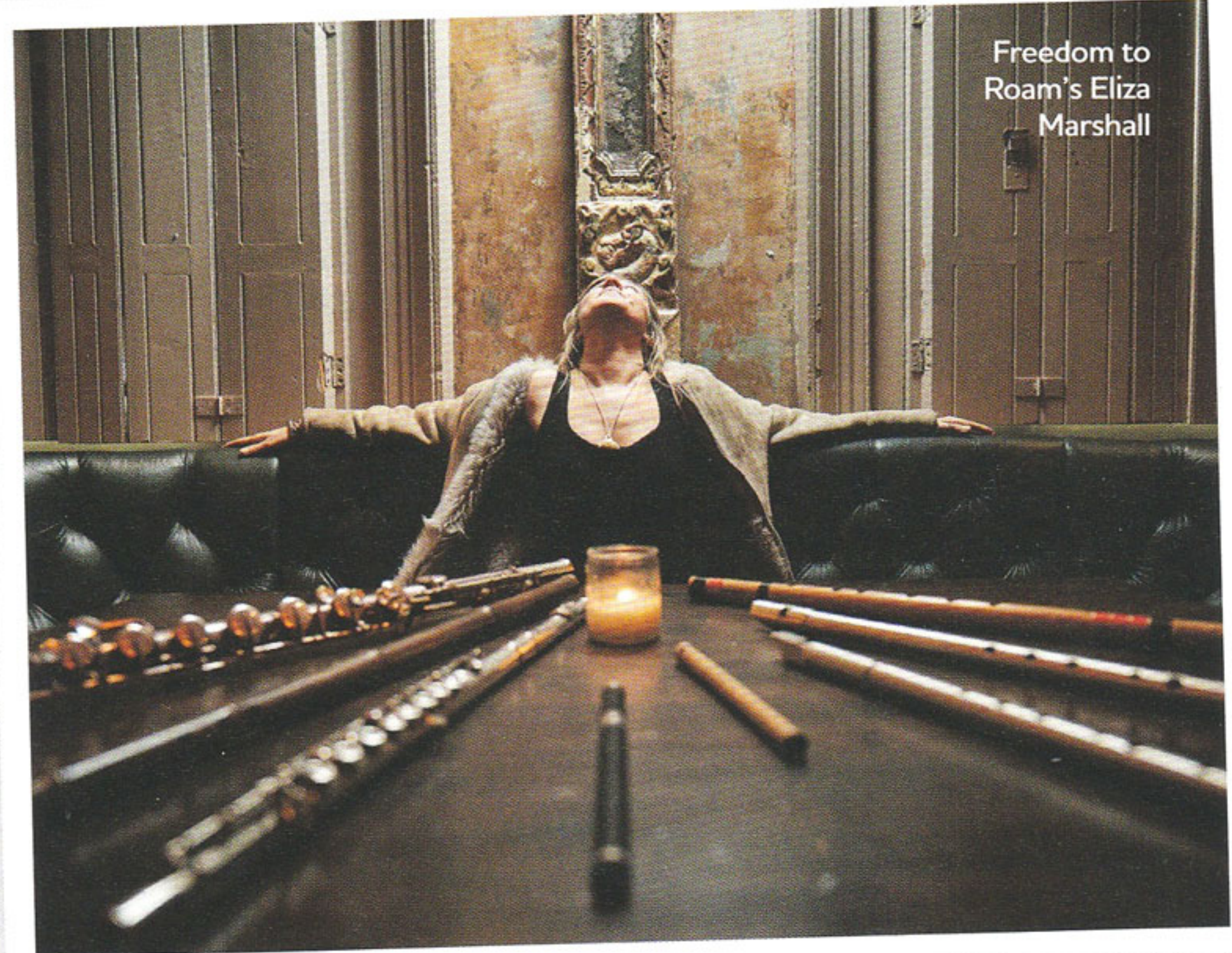
FOLK FOCUS

What's happening in the folk world

The recent drownings in the Channel have driven home the ongoing tragedy prevalent in the modern-day migration story. The very word – ‘migration’ – continues to conjure an attendant lexicon laden with scapegoats, bigotry and shattered dreams. We should be thankful, then, that there are those seeking to redress the balance, facing up to the subject with a more positive take, while still acknowledging the stark realities involved.

Spearheaded by classically-trained flautist **Eliza Marshall** (of *Ranagri* fame), **Freedom to Roam** is a star-studded project exploring the harshness, but also the euphoria, compassion and hope inherent in both human and animal migration. “I wanted to join the dots between the free migration we see in the natural world and the increasing difficulty faced by many who would like to move across borders to better their lives,” explains Marshall. “In its broadest sense, I hope this project might inspire people to each do something to redress the balance of what we’ve done to our planet... to help change our understanding of nature, wildness and our pivotal role in the future of life on this planet.”

Featuring the exceptional talents of **Catrin Finch, Jackie Shave, Kuljit Bharna, Donal Rogers, Robert Irvine, Lydia Lowndes-Northcott** and **Joby Burgess**, the resulting album – *The Rhythms of Migration* – is an engagingly immersive, occasionally joyous, cross-pollination of African, Celtic and Indian folk and classical styles, traversing themes from climate change to conflict, empathy to displacement. Lovingly crafted and alive with motion, Marshall and company should be



Freedom to Roam's Eliza Marshall

applauded for having created a collection so inspirational and thought-provoking from the base materials of our madness. “There are still opportunities to change the course we are on and for us to become more aware, less centred,” Marshall insists. “‘What ifs’ can turn into action, things can change if we want them to strongly enough.”

+ **ALBUM** *Freedom to Roam: The Rhythms of Migration* is reviewed this issue, see p61

+ **DATE** The album's launch will be held at Cecil Sharp House, London on December 18, with a performance hosted by, and in aid of, the Born Free Foundation, www.bornfree.org.uk

UPCOMING GIGS AND TOURS

Pimp up your diary, don your winter fleece and head for an appointment with the finest live acts folk has to offer in the coming months, including performances by legendary British folk-rock outfit **Fairport Convention**, critically-acclaimed and singer-songwriter **Kate Rusby**, carolling capers from both **Maddy Prior & The Carnival Band** and **The Albion Christmas Band**, plus some nature-centred sustenance from the **Spell Songs** ensemble (pictured). See the Gig Guide on p83 for more details.



CURRENT FOLK RELEASES

Here's our pick of the some of the best folk albums reviewed in this issue:

1. **Norman Blake** *Day by Day*, the Americana champion's gritty emotional send-off, reviewed on p46
2. **Good Habits** *Antipody*, top-tier cello and accordion duo, reviewed on p50
3. **Seth Lakeman** *Make Your Mark*, West Country singer goes global, see p51
4. **Mànran** *URAR*, return of the reinvigorated trad-rockers, reviewed on p51
5. **Various Artists** *The Village Out West: The Lost Tapes of Alan Oakes*, deep trawl through the West Coast folk archives, reviewed p48

FORTHCOMING RELEASES

Keep an eye open for these folk and roots albums, all to be reviewed in the March 2022 issue, out January 28:

1. **Nora Brown** *Sidetrack My Engine*
2. **Jake Xerxes Fussell** *Good and Green Again*
3. **The Longest Johns** *Smoke + Oakum*
4. **Christy Moore** *Flying Into Mystery*
5. **Vigüela** *Temperamento: Traditional Music from Spain*

