

## THE NORTHERN BELLE :: BIO 2020 “We Wither, We Bloom” *Die With Your Boots On Rec*

Sometimes it takes new surroundings to help jumpstart a new creative season. That’s exactly what happened for Oslo, Norway’s The Northern Belle, who gathered inspiration for their incredibly personal new album *We Wither, We Bloom* (out Aug. 28/new Euro release March 26, 2021) at the very epicenter of country music, both past and present.

After meeting at Oslo’s Nordic Institute of Stage and Studio in 2012, members Stine Andreassen (lead vocals/guitar), Ole-Andre Sjøgren (guitar/mandolin), Bjørnar Ekse Brandseth (dobro/pedal steel guitar), Johanne Flottorp (Hardanger fiddle), Marie Tveiten (percussion/guitar), Yngve Jordalen (bass) and Svein Inge Bjørkedal (drums) came together to form The Northern Belle. They went on to release their first single “Go On” in 2013 and cultivated a dedicated local following. In 2015, they released their self-titled debut record, which earned them widespread media coverage and major festival slots, including Norway’s Øyafestivalen, Bukta Open Air Festival and Piknik I Parken.

After delivering their well-received live album *Live at Oslo Concert Hall* in 2017, they released their highly-anticipated followup *Blinding Blue Neon*, which earned a Spellemann Award (Norwegian Grammy) nomination for Best Country Album. These releases positioned The Northern Belle at the forefront of the burgeoning “Nordicana” scene that is also anchored by artists and bands like Silver Lining (which Andreassen is also a member of), Malin Pettersen, Darling West, Signe Marie Rustad, Louien and more.

Now, the band is gearing up to release *We Wither, We Bloom*, the group’s most personal and riveting album to date. In order to capture some new creative inspiration, Andreassen traveled to Nashville to write new material in early 2019. During that three month period, she was surrounded by new inspiration — along with a feeling of homesickness and reflection -- that is weaved through each song on the record.

She quickly found a home within the city’s collaborative community and began co-writing with other artists for the very first time. By opening herself up to new experiences and viewpoints, Andreassen found the spark she had been hoping for.

“In Nashville, I got the help and the boost I needed to work even harder,” Andreassen explained.

After returning home to Norway, the band went into the studio with producer Marcus Forsgren (Jaga Jazzist, The Lionheart Brothers) and immediately got to work. With a solid collection of songs in hand, they built a sea of sonic layers that included everything from the traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle to dreamy pedal steel and driving electric guitar. By letting the songs come together organically, the Northern Belle cultivated a sound that melds elements of 60s pop, 70s rock alongside traditional folk and country. The result encompasses the clever wit, unbridled honesty and confident swagger of acts like Stevie Nicks, Kathleen Edwards, Dolly Parton and Kacey Musgraves.

“I think it is important to have an open mind and give the songs time to grow,” she noted. “I cried when we recorded the string quartet. It’s been a dream of mine for a long time and it hit all the right spots.”

It's impossible to ignore the power and emotion of Andreassen's voice, whether she's standing up to an unruly ex ("Remember It"), severing ties with a friend ("No Clue") or giving yourself permission to chase your dreams ("Late Bloomer"). The record is full of lighter moments too, including the charming "Tailor Made," a nod to country music's famous Nudie suit attire.

"The album was both easy and hard to write at the same time," Andreassen says. "When it clicked, the songs came pouring out. These songs are deeply personal and it's been a roller coaster."

One of the most powerful cuts on *We Wither, We Bloom* is "Gemini," an exploration of the double standards and prejudices women face on a daily basis. It's a shining example of the honest and gutsy songwriting that can be found throughout The Northern Belle's latest release.

From beginning to end, *We Wither, We Bloom* finds the Northern Belle with their roots still planted firmly in the sound that brought them, while embracing a magical new season of creative evolution.