



Ten things you didn't know about *Eliza Carthy*

Daughter of Norma Waterson and Martin Carthy, Eliza has been rocking the folk scene since she was 13 – but on Saturday she plays her first London show in her own right at Bloomsbury Theatre. LP 'Dreams of Breathing Under Water', is out now.



TOM HOWARD

She lives in Sherwood Forest

'... in a neo-gothic archway down a little bridleway. I'm minding it for friends. I used to pretend I was Maid Marian when I was a kid – and now I am! It's got a huge ballroom above the archway. We had a New Year's party with loud, silly rock music and pineapple on sticks.'

She stopped dyeing her hair for fear she'd shrivel up like a prune

'I never liked it hippy-streaky; I liked a good solid red or royal blue, but that meant using loads of peroxide, and a friend kept texting me about one of the '50s starlets who died of peroxide poisoning. I stopped while I still had some hair left.'

She just lost the start of her novel

'My hard drive died recently and I lost four years' worth of photos and the first and only chapter of the book I was writing on tour. It's a story about a boy looking for his father, and part of it is set in a circus that's run by a bear with a mouse in its ear. I've been doing this job for 20 years now, next spring, and I found that I'd let all my other stuff go, things that defined me. Now I'm just a fiddle player, a folk singer. I wrote four novels when I was a kid.'



Robinson will accidentally let one off, and my housemate will shout doo-dah from the other room. Without realising it you can get three or four good doo-dahs into a quick conversation.'

The best present she ever got is...

'... an interactive R2-D2 robot. You can ask him about certain "Star Wars" characters and he'll react with a good or a bad noise. If you ask about Darth Vader he screams and gets really upset. So me and my ex spent quite a lot of time saying "Darth Vader" and now he's in quite a state. I'm thinking about rebooting him. Also, for Christmas, my cousin Mary gave me a silk button painted with a landscape of Robin Hood's Bay, where we're from.'

Busking cures her blues

'Things were much tougher three years ago – working really hard, not getting anywhere, big rotten divorce, big nasty splitting up with manager. The kind of stuff that makes you go: Fuck this I'm getting a job in Tesco kind of shite. One of the upsides of being a musician is that, at the end of the day, you can always pick your fiddle up and go on to the streets. I went busking in Newcastle and bought myself a nice steak.'

She fears motherhood will turn her into a bowl of madness

'My baby's due on December 16 and I play my last gig nine days before. I've met perfectly sane, perfectly cynical women who do turn into bowls of madness when they give birth. My boyfriend [bluegrass musician Aidan Curran] is there already. He only talks to the area between my boobs and my hips. Usually men talk to my boobs.'

If she could live at any point in history, it'd be now

'I'm not one of these big nostalgic types. I don't want to be sent down the mines, or transported to America. And I'm not interested in dying in childbirth – especially at the moment!'

Interview: Bella Todd



She's very superstitious

'Coming from a travelling family, and one that lives by the sea, we're rife with superstition. When you finish eating a boiled egg, you've got to turn it over, smash a hole in it and say, "save a sailor". Otherwise the witches will sail it out to sea and sink all the ships. My ex thought we made it up but I heard someone talking about it on the radio the other day, so up yours mate.'

The biggest running joke in her family is Martin Carthy's nose

'It's huge! But he's very proud of his nose is my dad. Someone did a painting of him once and was very kind around the nose area. They've romanticised his face and taken a couple of yards off. He doesn't like it 'cos it just isn't him.'

She's invented a new poetic form

'It's called the doo-dah and it's kind of like a haiku. You get a sentence of nine or seven syllables and you add doo-dah on the end, like, Mrs Wilson's lovely pies, doo-dah, doo-dah. It's really therapeutic and addictive. I'll be watching "The Weakest Link" and Anne