



## The Guggenheim Grotto

### Biography

Over the past five years Dublin-based alt-folk duo The Guggenheim Grotto has touched audiences in a way members Kevin May and Mick Lynch couldn't have imagined. From setting out as Dublin songwriter circuit regulars, to building a devoted cult following in the U.S. with warm embraces from media and competitive iTunes charting, the band has captivated audiences and tastemakers on both sides of the pond and undergone considerable personal growth along the way.

The band's forthcoming album, *The Universe Is Laughing*, might just be its most artistically mature piece of work to date. A lyrical journey through life's beautiful mysteries, the record sees Kevin and Mick further develop themes of self-discovery and enlightenment they first visited on 2009's *Happy The Man*.

"Perhaps what is different this time round is that those ideas are less visible at first glance," said primary songwriter Kevin May. "But listen to the title track 'The Universe Is Laughing,' a paean to the mystery of the passage of time and our brief but beautiful existence. Or hear Mick's powerful vocal on 'Concentrate.' He starts out a wounded lover but in the second verse he's transfigured and sounds like a prophet, one who should be listened to."

The Guggenheim Grotto emerged in 2005 to critical acclaim in Ireland with its debut album ... *Waltzing Alone* when the first single "Told You So" reached No. 12 on the Irish National Airplay Charts. Later the band found success abroad much in part to early champions like David Dye at WXPB in Philadelphia, XM Radio's "The Loft" and Nic Harcourt at KCRW in Los Angeles. ... *Waltzing Alone* eventually spent weeks at the No. 1 spot on the iTunes Folk Chart in April 2007 after the opening track "Philosophia" was chosen as iTunes Free Single of the Week. The song was also featured on the first generation iPhone as a sample song on test models in stores and "Told You So" made it onto a Starbucks Hear Music sampler alongside Damien Rice, James Blunt and Amy Winehouse

Two years later The Guggenheim Grotto released *Happy The Man* as an iTunes exclusive in October 2008, and the album quickly rose again to No. 1 on the iTunes Folk Chart. January 2009 saw the physical release, and the band spent much of the year traversing these United States to promote it – from playing listening rooms across the country to large festivals, performing on nationally syndicated programs like E-Town in Boulder, CO and Charleston, WV's Mountain Stage and opening dates with Ani DiFranco and They Might Be Giants. The album received tremendous support from Triple A radio, several songs made their way into major network primetime TV shows like *One Tree Hill* and *Brothers And Sisters*, and a YouTube

featured video for the first single, “Her Beautiful Ideas,” garnered over 160,000 views in just a few days.

Now, poised to release its third album in June 2010, The Guggenheim Grotto firmly holds its ground with a new offering sure to please fans and critics alike. A record largely written and recorded in hotels and living rooms while crossing this wide country on tour, *The Universe Is Laughing* is an ode to lovers and madmen as much as a shout out to carnival hucksters and easy mystics. It celebrates the joy of falling in love and then forgetting what all the fuss was about. It preaches sticking to your guns, fighting the good fight and standing with your hands hung loosely by your side. It’s about marching, chopping wood, highways, girls wearing pretty dresses, sinking churches, ghost towns, chasing answers, getting drunk, rabbits and weasels, tiny white lies, the sun, the moon and the whole damn universe. It’s about dancing in the grey.

Standout tracks like the album’s upbeat first single “Wisdom” or the title track and ukulele tune “The Universe Is Laughing” juxtapose heady concepts, compelling melodies and accessible lyrics. The former challenges a list of guidelines society gives us to find happiness and righteousness with the chorus “I listen and I hear what’s said/ I follow it from A to zed/ But wisdom hasn’t found me yet,” complete with ironically sunshine-y la-la-la-la-las.

In “Ruby Heart,” excitable new love gives way to its senses and learns patience, while “Trust Me I’m A Thief,” cautions on the sometimes brutal honesty of our true nature. The Bowie-esque “Wings And Feathers” pays tribute to Jack Kerouac-inspired mad indulgences with lyrics drunk on love and life. “Tonight we take this city/ The marrow and the fringes/ We’ll set our dogs on beauty/ We’re growing wings and feathers,” May croons in the chorus over a bed of blissful and popping synths.

With equal amounts melancholy and jubilation, *The Universe Is Laughing* is a celebration of universal truths and the mysteries of humanity. The duo’s signature mix of timeless folk, soaring melodies and emotionally intelligent lyrics remains intact while Kevin and Mick delve deeper to search for meaning within themselves.

*The Universe Is Laughing* will be released on United for Opportunity in June 2010. The band will spend a significant amount of time in the U.S. to support it and plans to tour through the rest of the year.