

Long John Makkay Biog/Discography

Long John Makkay is an English singer-songwriter whose music draws deeply from the traditions of British folk, blues, country, and roots music. Raised in Hatfield, on the northern outskirts of London during the 1970s, Makkay began writing songs and learning guitar under the guidance of his uncle, writer and musician Bill Gardner. Early influences such as Bob Dylan, Donovan, English folk-rock, and American blues helped shape a distinctive style rooted in storytelling, poetic lyricism, and raw acoustic performance.

As his musical interests evolved, Makkay moved from acoustic folk into the world of electric guitar, immersing himself in the UK rock and blues scenes throughout the early 1980s. His passion for music soon extended beyond performance and into the live music industry itself. During the mid-1980s, he worked on many major international stadium tours, including Queen, U2's *Joshua Tree* tour, and Simple Minds, experiences that opened the door to a successful 30-year career as a professional production and tour manager. Across the late 1980s, 1990s, and beyond, Makkay oversaw major international artist tours, dance music events, and large-scale outdoor festivals before stepping away from the industry in 2016 to focus fully on new creative pursuits.

Alongside his production career, Makkay continued writing and performing his own music. Having spent extended periods living in both California and Denmark — while always maintaining strong ties to the UK — his music absorbed elements of American roots, West Coast blues, and British folk traditions. Touring the American West Coast as a harmonica and slide guitarist with The Silver Brazilians, a Yardbirds-inspired rockabilly and blues outfit, further deepened those influences.

Following the band's split, Makkay returned to a more personal and uncompromising musical direction, fronting a succession of blues and roots projects including Long John Laundry, The Black Devil Byrds, The Killer Blues Collective, and later the country-influenced outfit The Sixty Six. Across these projects, he steadily built a reputation for emotionally honest songwriting, gritty live performances, and a strong connection to grassroots music culture.

Now with eight self-penned albums to his name, Makkay's latest work marks a deeply personal return to acoustic roots music. The self-titled album *Long John Makkay* blends earthy British blues, English folk influences, Americana, and country into what is perhaps his most reflective collection to date.

"The songs usually begin with finding a riff on my acoustic guitar," says Makkay. "Then I almost meditate on it and let the words and feelings come naturally. It's a process that really works for me as a writer."

Makkay first attracted wider attention in 2009 with the single *Desert Sands*, which received six weeks of airplay on Classic Rock Radio and introduced his music to a broader audience. Since then, his work has featured regularly in publications including Classic Rock Magazine, RnR Magazine, and *The Blues Magazine*, with subsequent albums earning strong critical acclaim and radio support across blues, country, and folk networks.

Recent tracks from the new album have continued that momentum. *Hidden in the Shadows* and several of the album's more folk-oriented songs have received support from UK folk radio stations, while the opening track *Honey* was aired on BBC Introducing. The album has also enjoyed UK Country Radio support, including a Top 5 chart placing.

Released through Root Spell Records, the album *Long John Makkay* was conceived specifically as a physical-format release aimed directly at independent record shops and vinyl collectors. The heavyweight picture-disc vinyl edition includes a download card featuring additional bonus tracks, bringing the project to a total of 16 songs — firmly placing it in double-album territory. In keeping with Makkay’s long-standing support for grassroots music culture and physical media, the album is currently unavailable on streaming platforms.

“This album is really the poetry of my life,” says Makkay. “Songs about friends, lovers, and social observations written over twenty years or more — songs that once felt too personal to perform. Now they feel like old friends.”

Produced by Dave Banks at Little Red Studios in Bedfordshire, the album preserves the intimacy and atmosphere of Makkay’s original demo recordings while expanding them into a rich, organic studio production.

Only 500 first-edition picture-disc vinyl and CD copies were initially pressed, available through selected independent record shops and directly from LJMakkay.com.

Discography

- *Wild Evil* — Long John Laundry (2009)
- *Live in London* — Long John Laundry (2010)
- *Cocos Corner* — Long John Laundry (2012)
- *Long John Laundry* — Long John Laundry (2013)
- *Long John & The Black Devil Byrds* (2015)
- *Heavy Electric Blues* — Long John & The Killer Blues Collective (2017)
- *LJ Makkay and The Sixty Six* (2024)
- *Long John Makkay* (2026)

Touring

Makkay has performed extensively throughout the UK, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and the United States, both as a solo artist and with various band line-ups spanning blues, roots, folk, and Americana music.