



Samantha Fish

NEW STUDIO ALBUM **KILL OR BE KIND**
RELEASED ON FRIDAY 20th SEPTEMBER ON ROUNDER RECORDS

DISTRIBUTED BY PROPER MUSIC IN THE UK

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Genre-bending guitarist, singer, and songwriter **Samantha Fish** will release her new studio album **Kill Or Be Kind** on **Friday 20th September 2019** on **Rounder Records** and distributed in the UK by **Proper Music**.

Fish's incendiary live performances have been mesmerizing audiences all over the globe. Now, with **Kill Or Be Kind**, Fish is poised for a major breakthrough. The edgy roots music album was recorded at **Royal Studios** in Memphis and produced by three-time Grammy winner **Scott Billington** and mixed by two-time Grammy winner **Steve Reynolds**. Boasting 11 original songs ranging from the electric cigar box stomp of "**Bulletproof**" to the sweet Memphis R&B of "**Trying Not To Fall in Love With You**", the album is sure to establish Fish as a potent force in roots music.

The Kansas City-born-and-bred musician flirts with tradition but pushes genre

boundaries to create a sound that's distinctly her own: "**She Don't Live Here Anymore**", co-written by Parker Millsap, features a Memphis soul underpinning with a sustained vibrato guitar sound that edges toward country. "**Love Your Lies**" persuasively straddles punk, rockabilly, and soul; while "**You Got It Bad (Better Than You Ever Had)**" is a classic blues rocker, thick with layered guitars and a cigar box solo. She shows off her range with the sweetly wistful "**Dream Girl**" and the cathartic, blues saturated "**Farewell My Fair Weather**".

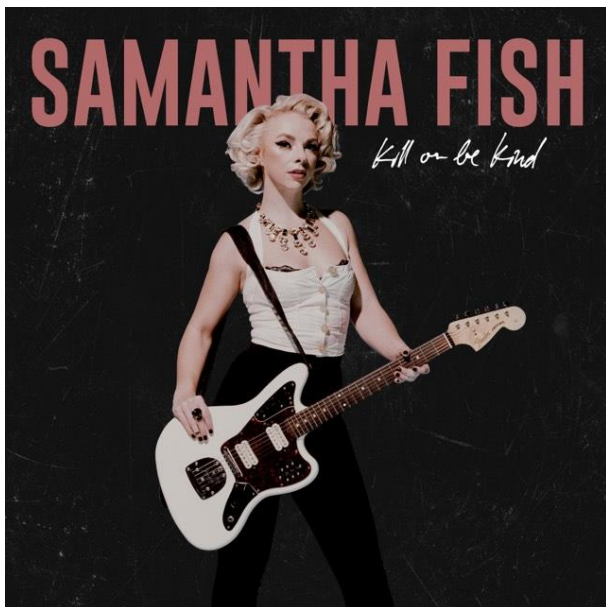
"That was my mission on this album: To really set these songs up so that they have a life of their own," says **Samantha Fish** about **Kill or Be Kind**, her sixth solo album and her debut on **Rounder Records**. *"Strong messages from the heart – that's what I really set out for."* Indeed, what comes across immediately on hearing the album is the extraordinary level of songcraft on its eleven tracks, the way these songs are so smartly put together to deliver a potent emotional impact.

Anyone who has ever heard Fish's previous albums knows that she has earned a place in the top rank of contemporary blues guitarists and that her voice can wring the soul out of a ballad and belt out a rocker with roof-shaking force. And, rest reassured, those virtues are fully in evidence on **Kill or Be Kind**. But each of the songs on the album does far more than simply provide a setting for Fish's pyrotechnics. They tell captivating stories, set up by verses that deftly set the scene, choruses that lift with real feeling, and hooks that later rise up in your thoughts, even when you're not aware that you're thinking of music at all. It's the kind of songwriting that emerges when raw talent is leavened by experience and aspiration, and when a committed artist genuinely has something to say. Those qualities make **Kill or Be Kind** a genuine artistic breakthrough for Fish.

“I think I’ve grown as a performer and as a player,” she explains. “I’ve become more respectful of the melody. You can go up and down the fret board and up and down your vocal register, but that’s not going to be as powerful as conveying a simple melody that people can really connect to and sing themselves.”

To help bring those elements to her music, Fish sought out high-quality songwriting collaborators – the likes of **Jim McCormick** (who has worked with Fish before and also written for Luke Bryan and Keith Urban); **Kate Pearlman** (who has worked with Kelly Clarkson); **Patrick Sweeney**; **Parker Millsap**; and **Eric McFadden**. The result is an album on which each song is distinct, but the complete work hangs together as a coherent, entirely satisfying statement. *“When you get to this point in your life as an artist,” Fish says, “it’s good to work with others, because it makes you stretch. I think you hear a lot of that nuance on the record, songs that have a pop sensibility to them, hooks that really pull you in.”*

To make **Kill or Be Kind**, Fish chose to work at the legendary **Royal Studios** in Memphis, with **Scott Billington** as producer. *“I worked at Royal before, when I made my **Wild Heart** album,” she says. “The soul in the walls, the vibe – you can feel it in that place. I’m such a fan of Al Green, Ann Peebles and all the classic recordings that happened there. Memphis just kept calling to me. I’ve always felt so inspired there.”* As for Billington, a three-time Grammy winner, Fish appreciated both his open-mindedness and his willingness to ease her out of her comfort zone. *“Scott allowed me to see the building-out process of the album all the way through, from the top to the bottom,” she says. “Bringing in background singers and synthesizers, which I’d never done on an album before, that added an extra edge. Honestly, it was a challenge. It pushed me to think about the songs differently. That trust from my producer gave me the freedom to really take some risks.”*



Kill or Be Kind – Track listing

1. **Bulletproof** (05:19)
2. **Kill or Be Kind** (03:45)
3. **Love Letters** (03:38)
4. **Watch it Die** (05:00)
5. **Try Not to Fall in Love with You** (04:04)
6. **Fair-Weather** (04:12)
7. **Love Your Lies** (02:47)
8. **Dream Girl** (04:14)
9. **She Don't Live Around Here** (05:45)
10. **Dirty** (03:27)
11. **You Got It Bad** (03:21)

Kill or Be Kind

Track by Track by Samantha Fish

You get a good sense of the range the album covers from the first two songs released. Fish propels **“Watch It Die”** with an insistent guitar riff, but near the song’s end two female background singers lend the song a haunting soulful feel.

Meanwhile, **“Love Letters”** moves on an insinuating, stop-time riff in its verses until it bursts in passion on its chorus. Both songs use horn sections for finesse and texture. **“Love Letters”** also introduces one of the album’s central themes: the allure of losing yourself in love – and the dangers of it. *“Keep waking up in the bed I made,” Fish sings. “Forget the pain when you wanna play/I’m back to broken when you go away.”*

“That’s just a love-sick song,” Fish says, laughing. “like I think I was when I wrote it. ” The title track **“Kill or Be Kind”**, a seductive ballad, offers a lover a stark choice: *“Make up your mind/I can kill or be kind.”* To explain that dichotomy, Fish says, *“It’s funny how love can be so fickle, how quickly you go from object of affection to one of disdain. I’ve always found that dynamic interesting. That track is full of that duality.”*

“I also love the Memphis sound of the horns on there. They sound modern, but it’s got this vintage feeling as well.”

The songs **“Dirty,” “Love Your Lies”** and **“Fair-Weather”** explore similar themes – how deceit, self-deception and shifting expectations can alter the course of life and love.

The affecting ballad “**Dream Girl**” stands the endearment of its title on its head and explores the dilemma of a love not coming to fruition. “I wish you’d take the rest of me,” Fish sings. “These tears, they kill your fantasy.”

On “**She Don’t Live Around Here Anymore**,” a soul ballad once again bolstered by tasteful horn parts, the singer confronts the feeling of being used and finds empowerment in walking away.

The album is framed by songs -- “**Bulletproof**” and “**You Got It Bad (Better Than You Ever Had)**”.

“**Bulletproof**” digs into the theme of vulnerability, about it being mistaken for weakness, and how we often times feel the need to wear a mask to survive in the world today, while “**You Got It Bad (Better Than You Ever Had)**” is about working towards your dreams and the knives edge we often walk to reach our goals.

“**Trying Not to Fall in Love With You**” finds the singer not wanting to rush a relationship – and therefore undermine it. “I fall fast,” Fish admits, “I have to remember to take care and not scare the person away.”

SAMANTHA FISH – BIOGRAPHY

After launching her recording career in 2009, Samantha Fish quickly established herself as a rising star in the contemporary blues world. Since then, the charismatic young singer-guitarist-songwriter has earned a reputation as a rising guitar hero and powerful live performer, while releasing a series of acclaimed albums that have shown her restless creative spirit consistently taking her in new and exciting musical directions.

The New York Times called Fish “an impressive blues guitarist who sings with sweet power” and “one of the genre’s most promising young talents.” Her hometown paper The Kansas City Star noted, “Samantha Fish has kicked down the door of the patriarchal blues club” and observed that the young artist “displays more imagination and creativity than some blues veterans exhibit over the course of their careers.”

Black Wind Howlin’ (2013) and *Wild Heart* (2015) followed, winning considerable critical acclaim and further establishing Fish as a prominent presence in the blues community. *Wild Heart* reached the top slot on Billboard’s blues chart. She also collaborated with blues-rock veterans Jimmy Hall and Reese Wynans on the 2013 project *The Healers*. The same year, she jammed onstage with blues icon Buddy Guy, and guested on Devon Allman’s album *Turquoise*.

Having already made it clear that she’s more interested in following her heart than she is in repeating past triumphs, Samantha Fish delivered some of her most compelling music to date with *Belle of the West*, her fifth studio album. The deeply soulful, personally charged 11-song set showcases Fish’s sublime acoustic guitar skills as well as her rootsy, emotionally resonant song writing.

Belle of the West followed on the heels of Fish’s March 2017 release *Chills & Fever*, which achieved top 10 status in the Billboard Blues charts. Here she expanded her stylistic arsenal to take on a set of lesser-known vintage R&B gems, with help from members of garage-soul stalwarts the Detroit Cobras. “Having these two very different records come out back to back that year has been really liberating,” says Samantha.

The creative drive that fuels *Belle of the West* and *Chills & Fever* has been a crucial element of Samantha Fish’s approach from the beginning. Growing up in a musical family in Kansas City, Missouri, she became obsessed with music early life, taking up drums before switching to guitar at the age of 15. By the time she was 20, she had formed her own trio and self-released her first album. She soon caught the ear of the renowned blues label Ruf Records, which in 2011 released *Girls with Guitars*, which teamed her with fellow axewomen Cassie Taylor and Dani Wilde. The same year saw Ruf release Fish’s solo studio debut *Runaway*. The album was named Best Artist Debut at the 2012 Blues Music Awards in Memphis.

Fish continues to maintain the same hardworking, prolific approach that’s carried her this far. “I think I’ve always had that,” she says. “Music is my life, so what other choice do I have but to go out and make music? We do tour quite a bit, and maybe it’s kind of crazy to put out two dramatically different albums in one year. But I like to work hard. This is who I am, and this is what I do, and when I’m writing and recording and touring is when I feel the most like myself. And now we have a moment where people are paying attention, so I have to make the most of it. I feel like I have a lot to say right now, so why not say it?”

As far as Samantha Fish is concerned, her musical future is an open road. “I’m never gonna be a traditional blues artist, because that’s not who I am,” she asserts. “But it’s all the blues for me. When Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf came out, what they were doing didn’t sound like anything that had been done in blues before. You’ve gotta keep that kind of fire and spirit. I’m never gonna do Muddy Waters better than Muddy Waters, so I have to be who I am and find my best voice. Her new studio album *Kill Or Be Kind* will be released on Friday 20th September by Rounder Records.

SAMANTHA FISH ONLINE

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