

Spring magical time for musician

By Jae-Ha Kim
Tribune Content Agency

"Every audience has a regional vibe (that's) wonderful," musician Dar Williams said. "I've learned that in the United Kingdom, oftentimes they are laughing and appreciating a concert — on the inside. After the concert is when I find out I haven't bombed."

"Irish audiences have been so demonstrative and generous. I told an audience in Dublin that I couldn't do an encore because I'd just caught my family's stomach bug and had to throw up. They applauded with gusto. Canadian audiences appreciate every kind of humor. New England is very different from the Bay Area too! You can really feel it. These have been my general experiences."

Williams' latest album, "Hummingbird Highway," is a cohesive collection of songs that celebrate the everyday moments at home and when she's on the road touring.

This interview with the New York resident was edited for length and clarity.

Q: Was "Tu Sais Le Printemps" from your new album influenced by any time you've spent in France?

A: I'm positive that any time in France will stay with you forever. Back in 2002, our honeymoon was morning coffee, a couple of museums, long dinners and about 10 miles of walking every day across bridges, around cathedrals and through ornate flower



"Hummingbird Highway" singer-songwriter Dar Williams is looking forward to touring again in 2026. CARLY RAE BRUNALT

gardens. But you don't have to go to Paris to know the effect that spring can have on memory and inhibition.

Q: Why did you decide to include a few French phrases in the song?

A: There is a beautiful photo of French defiance that I saw in 2016. It was of three lacy bras, blue, white and red, hanging from a wrought-iron balcony. Romance is so important. Originally the whole song was in French, but alas, high school-level aptitude was insufficient, one might say.

Q: Do you speak French or any other languages besides English?

A: I've been a diligent Spanish-app learner for three years, and I remember having enough French to tell a drunk teenager on a boat that he had to get to an upper deck because of the gas fumes. I thought, "Enough French to be helpful. I'll take it." That said, I told an audience in Paris that my babysitter had pants with many corridors.

Q: How do you maintain your health when touring?

A: I have a long list of ways to stay healthy — sleep, water, stretching, hand-washing — and a long list of things to do when you're unfortunately sick (that includes) lemon water, ibuprofen, apple

cider vinegar shots, lowering the keys to every song! My life changed when I learned that reducing inflammation is key. I feel like turmeric supplements cut my illnesses down to an eighth of what they'd been in number and duration.

Q: Do you work on songs when you're traveling?

A: I love walking through a museum, thinking my thoughts, then getting a coffee and working on a song. I also love being at home with my guitar and messing around with different chords to jump-start things. The best is when songs just come up in daily life.

Q: Do you have any upcoming trips planned?

A: We have a national tour for "Hummingbird Highway" from the winter through spring 2026, and then I'm off to the U.K. and Ireland for the first time since 2018.

Q: Where are your favorite weekend getaways?

A: My touring life is all about loving the rest of the world. My nontouring weekends are about discovering my own turf.

Q: What are your five favorite cities?

A: Montreal, Edinburgh, London, Berkeley and Pittsburgh.

For more from the reporter, visit www.jaehakim.com.

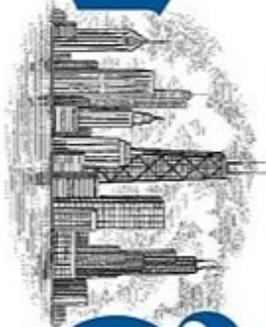


QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Chicago Tribune



WINNER OF 28 PULITZER PRIZES FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM