

Sarah Smout - Artist Bio

“Deeply lovely” – Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2

Sarah is a cellist-singer and activist, creating music and poetry deeply rooted in nature and place. Her music has been played on BBC Radio 2, BBC Look North, and has been used for environmental campaigns by Greenpeace, COP26 and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Prior to her solo career, she toured and recorded internationally with renowned artists such as Michael Chapman, Bridget St John, The Mediaeval Baebes, Gren Bartley, King Creostoe, The Magpies and many more. This led her to appear at many mainstream and folk festivals across the globe such as Primavera Sound, Shambala, Greenbelt, Cambridge, Green Man, Larmer Tree, and Folk Alliance International.

As a singer and poet in her own right, it was only a matter of time before she began a solo career. In 2017, her song ‘**Arctic Ground**’ was written for **Greenpeace** and used for one of their Save the Arctic campaign videos, which depicts the tremendous efforts of protestors and native tribes against oil drilling.

After touring the Highlands and Hebrides in 2017/18 with Sophie Ramsay, they set off on their most ambitious journey to date - a musical voyage over land and sea from **Orkney to Iceland, including a sail boat between Shetland and the Faroes**. This experience has resulted in Sarah developing her entrancing new **solo show, ‘Eyjar’**, combining poetry, song and looped cello soundscapes which explore our connections to nature and place. Interweaved within it are dialect words for flora and fauna from each island, and interpretations of traditional songs learnt from local musicians en-route. After an enforced hiatus through the covid lockdowns, 2021 saw Sarah performing a sold out solo show at **Hinterlands Festival, Skipton**, and the **English Folk Expo/Manchester Folk Festival** supporting **Sam Lee**, with plans for future festivals and touring TBA.

Sarah was also commissioned in summer 2021 by the **Ensemble Project at Lancaster University** to respond to their environmental research with a theme tune for their ‘Entangled’ Festival. Entitled Sinking Sand, Sarah wrote and recorded the song at her home studio, and filmed and released a music video at Heysham Head which is at risk of sea erosion.

2022 will see the release of a new short film made with The Northern Cowboys (<https://www.northerncowboyfilms.com/>) at a Dales Church close to Sarah’s heart. Hubberholme is a small hamlet where she has many memories, and the ancient church is a calm and beautiful sanctuary that has seen huge changes happen in the Dales, but has remained largely unchanged itself. Sarah wanted to film and record here with the beautiful acoustics and special, personal meaning attached to the location. This film will feature material from Eyjar and other songs about Sarah’s connection to nature, intertwined with footage of the location and a new poem inspired by the river. This project was awarded funding by Help Musicians and Launchpad Leeds (<https://www.launchpad-music.com/>). The film premiered in May 2022 at Skipton Plaza Cinema as part of Hinterlands Festival.

Later in the year Sarah will also be continuing her work with Yorkshire Peat Partnership at various events and workshops, combining her passion for the environment with finding new and exciting ways to communicate the need for conservation and education about climate change through the arts and sciences.

Wild Music

Sarah’s creative career is built on a deep passion for collaboration and the environment. Wild Music combines the two in a project between Sarah and **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust**. Born out of an idea to shoot a music video on her home county’s iconic moorland, Sarah has established a unique working relationship with YWT to create a

series of outdoor music videos highlighting some of Yorkshire's most fragile environments. The first saw her single 'Atlas' released in June 2021 alongside a video set on a blanket bog restoration site, which was played at COP26 in Glasgow, as well as COP26 tv, and received airplay on the BBC Radio 2 Folk Show. The video also received press in publications such as **Living North**, **Yorkshire Dales Review**, **IUCN**, **Yorkshire Post** and others, including an interview and feature on **BBC Look North**.

The next Wild Music video will be filmed on the coast in 2022, to raise awareness of plastic pollution and the effects of climate change on the coastal habitats and people. Sarah will be working with Laura Hudson, a professional mermaid, ocean conservationist and seamstress, to create an outfit for the video made from sea-litter and recycled materials. Other members of the Wild Music team on this video are [Jenny Sharman](#), Peatland restoration officer at Yorkshire Peat Partnership, who will be directing and producing the video, and Billy White, a film maker in Skipton. Jenny's work as a director began in Africa where she produced several award-winning wildlife documentaries under the moniker True Nature Films. Alongside the release of the video and single in June, Sarah and YWT plan to hold beach clean-ups and events to further communicate the need for ocean conservation that involves and benefits the community.

Reviews and Press Quotes

'Deeply lovely' – Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2 Folk Show

Hinterlands Festival 2021:

'Sarah Smout offered the perfect opening to Hinterlands Festival with a set deeply rooted in time and place but containing within its apparent simplicity the power to transport the rapt audience across oceans. It was a performance born out of a combination of deeply felt experience, musical virtuosity and a captivating stage presence, and one felt very deeply by those lucky enough to witness it' – Sarah Bird, Director, Wild Rumpus

The Joinery, Settle Stories 2019:

'Throughout the evening's performance Sarah manages to bring to vivid life the variety of landscapes and the communities who inhabit them, from cries of seabirds and their pattering feet through to the howling gales and the harmonies of traditional songs, achieving wonderful and entrancing effects through her use of looped cello, song and poetry but most of all it is her clarity of vision which reaches out to the audience to draw them into her view of the world.' – Gill O'Donnell – full review - <https://www.settlestories.org.uk/review-returning-home>

'Imaginative, creative, innovative and deeply sensitive, but above all, brave.' – Sir John Lister Kaye, author and naturalist

'Sarah was a joy to work with. There wasn't one member in the sold-out audience who wasn't captivated by her extraordinary story and mesmerising music. During the Q&A, the most common question was when will you return?' - Charles Tyrer, Executive Director, Settle Stories

'A superb evening – moving, dreamy, evocative and stimulating, full of heart and soul and a deep care for the world' – Harriet Fraser, author, artist, and audience member

'Startlingly good arrangements' - FRUK

'beautiful' – Greenpeace International

Links:

YWT - Atlas video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dai6Fr20wR8>

Greenpeace - 'Arctic Ground' video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIKaOjPrMpY>

Sinking Sand – Ensemble Commission - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w6Ht_3TyL8&t=6s

BBC Look North interview – <https://www.facebook.com/sarahsmoutcello/videos/3938402409561492>

Link Tree – <https://linktr.ee/sarahsmout>

Website/Socials:

<https://www.sarahsmoutmusic.co.uk>

https://www.instagram.com/bernard_thecello

<https://www.facebook.com/sarahsmoutcello>

<https://twitter.com/SarahSmout2>