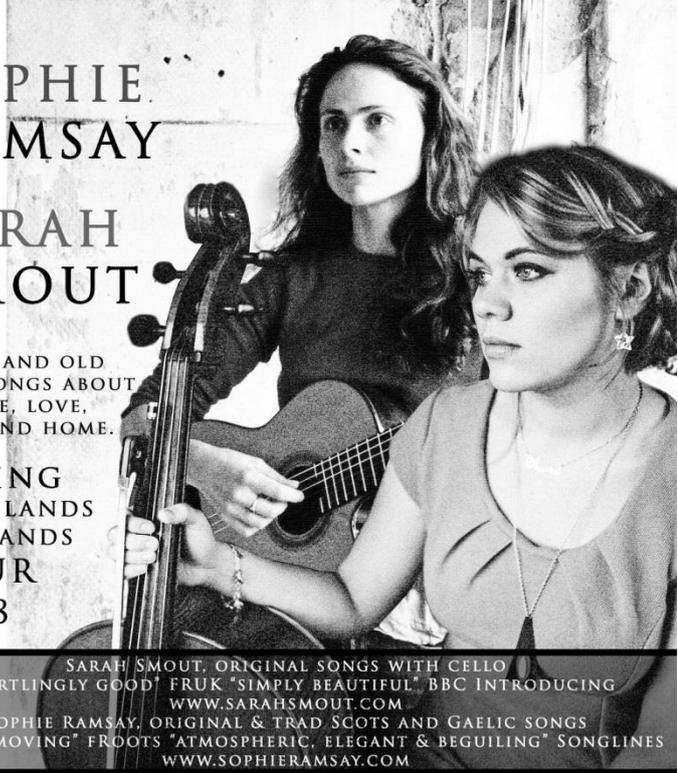


Celebrated cellist Sarah Smout hails from Yorkshire, and has toured internationally with acts including Michael Chapman, Bridget St. John, The Mediaeval Baebes, Rachel Ries, King Creosote, Rosie Doonan, Jess Morgan, and Gren Bartley. Her session work has also appeared on dozens of critically acclaimed albums in the folk, acoustic, and singer-songwriter scenes. Most recently she has joined forces with all female band The Magpies, a Celtic-bluegrass fusion of original songs and glittering instrumentals.

As a singer and poet in her own right, it was only a matter of time before she began a solo career. 2016 saw the release of her E.P. 'Decision to Leave' - songs with cello which are original, beautifully crafted and touching, spinning poetry driven lyrics inspired by landscape and sea, and exploring themes like home, land, love and climate change. She has also released a collection of nature poetry, a lovingly hand-made book using recycled paper. Her song 'Arctic Ground' was used by Greenpeace for a Save the Arctic campaign video, which depicts the tremendous efforts of protestors and native tribes against oil drilling.

Since 2017, Sarah has collaborated with singer-songwriter Sophie Ramsay, and together they have achieved several remote tours of the Highlands and Hebrides, including performances at Colonsay Festival, An Tobar (Mull), Uig village hall (Lewis) and many more. They also recorded a live EP at Bamff, Perthshire, entitled 'Atlas'.



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RAMSAY

SARAH
SMOUT

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10TH MAY: INVERWE, POOLEWE, WESTER ROSS
11TH MAY: THE TREEHOUSE, LOHCARRON, WESTER ROSS
12TH MAY: ARDROSS HALL, BY ALNESS, ROSS-SHIRE
13TH MAY: STRACHUR MEMORIAL HALL, ARGYLL
15TH MAY: AN CRIDHE, ARINAGOUR, ISLE OF COLL
17TH MAY: CRAIGNISH VILLAGE HALL, ARGYLL
18TH MAY: THE OYSTERCATCHER, OTTER FERRY, ARGYLL
19TH MAY: GIGHA VILLAGE HALL, ISLE OF GIGHA
20TH MAY: THE BIG SHED, ABERFELDY, PERTHSHIRE

In summer 2018, they embarked 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. So often, music tours are about flying or tour-bussing in somewhere and leaving without knowing anything more. For Sophie and Sarah, it's all about feeling the distances between places, meeting the people, seeing the shape of the land.

They made this journey to listen and collect, to express their environmentalism, and to experience travelling slowly. They took a path that has become fractured, but which was once frequently travelled by Norse and Celtic people, and one which is still taken by fish, seabirds and mammals. They saw ancient site, the Ness of Brodgar, being uncovered on Orkney; they met local singer John Budge on Hoy, and Lerwick-born brothers, 'North Ness Boys', who sang in Shetland dialect; they collaborated with Icelandic folk singer Ösp, and top Faroese fiddler Angelika Nielsen. They explored the islands, recorded natural sounds, and collected Old Norse words related to land and nature. Using this material, they intend to record a sound-map that explores connections to and within these landscapes through music, prose and poetry.



SOPHIE RAMSAY & SARAH SMOUT
present
EYJAR
ORKNEY - SHETLAND - ICELAND
*A musical journey over land and sea exploring
connections in the landscape*

Orkney
FRIDAY 29TH JUNE: GABLE END THEATRE

Shetland
WED 4TH JULY: ST MAGNUS' CHURCH HALL

Iceland
FRIDAY 13TH JULY: KÖPASKER
SATURDAY 14TH JULY: FOLK MUSIC CENTRE, SIGLUFJÖRÐUR
TUESDAY 17TH JULY: TJARNARKIRKJA, TJÖRN, DALVIK
WEDNESDAY 18TH JULY: (W/ÖSP) HANNESARHOLT, REYKJAVIK

2019 was an exciting year for Sarah, with appearances at many festivals across Europe, including Primavera Sound (Barcelona), Glastonbury, Green Man, Shambala, Larmer Tree, Costa del Folk and many more. She is also performing consistently with The Magpies across the UK, and will be touring in March 2020 to celebrate the release of their debut album, Tidings.

Future projects will see Sarah working with environmental organisations to create artistic content for various campaigns, as well as performing her solo show, 'Eyjar', at intimate venues throughout the year.



Reviews:

<https://www.settlestories.org.uk/review-returning-home>

RETURNING HOME: SARAH SMOUT

The Joinery: Settle Stories 31/8/19

Reviewed by Gill O'Donnell



Following an extraordinary voyage over sea to Iceland, via Orkney, Shetland and the Faroes, undertaken in collaboration with Sophie Ramsay, cellist and singer Sarah Smout has now returned home to Craven where she is currently working on creating a performance which captures this journey. Throughout their trip they recorded a variety of "soundbites", from winds howling, storms at sea, local music and seabirds which will be interwoven with music and poetry inspired by their journey.

The performance at The Joinery was a taster of this ongoing work and proved to be totally enthralling. Sarah's work is both informed and driven by her deep concerns for the environment and humankind's impact upon the natural world and is a striking blend of unique poetry, careful observation and skilled musicianship. This was immediately apparent from her opening track, "Atlas", a spell-binding composition which views the world through the eyes of a migrating bird who witnesses the growth of the oceans and the gradual disappearance of the ancient forests of the world. Her ethereal singing voice is particularly suited to this kind of haunting number and this was shown again and again throughout the evening.

Not all the music featured was of her own composition and this enhanced the programme as it showed a range of varied responses to the landscapes encountered. Particularly interesting was the song from Hoy, Orkney, the beautiful "Rackwick Bay". This was taught to them by John Budge, who had lived

there all his life and the song focuses on the feelings of someone leaving the island and a love behind and how both the landscape and emotions become intertwined. This theme was returned to in a number of tracks, not least in "Skara Brae" where the relationship between past and present was examined and the notion that home is more than just bricks and walls is but a concept. This was especially enhanced by the evocative and expressive Cello playing. At many points in the evening it felt as if the music itself was the tide washing over the audience and transporting them to other times and distant shores. One sea-scape however was unforgettable in its ferocity as the trip between the Shetlands and Faroes was marked by an extremely stormy crossing.

The sense of this was captured perfectly in Dougie Maclean's composition "Ready for the Storm" with the soundtrack becoming increasing frenetic. 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.

'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, writer and audience member**

'Imaginative, creative, innovative and deeply sensitive, but above all, brave. Congratulations on the initiative and the conviction that gave us such a splendid evening'. – **Sir John Lister Kaye**

'simply beautiful' - **BBC Introducing**

'Startlingly good arrangements' - **FRUK**

'beautiful' - **Arctic Ground / Greenpeace International**

Links:

A video documenting some of the sounds and experiences of Eyjar: <https://vimeo.com/345897021>

A video from Greenpeace using Sarah's song 'Arctic Ground':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlKaOjPrMpY>

Sarah and Sophie's live EP: <https://ramsaysmout.bandcamp.com>

Sarah's solo music: <https://sarahsmout.bandcamp.com>

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

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