



Press Release

Tune Into Nature Music Prize Winner 2021 Announced

Ceitidh Mac selected winner of the unique prize that grows connection to nature through contemporary popular music.



Ceitidh Mac: winner of the 2021 Tune Into Nature Music Prize. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The Oak Project is delighted to announce the winner of the second edition of the Tune Into Nature Music Prize, originated by Professor Miles Richardson from the Nature Connectedness Research Group at the University of Derby. The prize, which is supported by Tileyard London, Timber Festival and Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), searches for a new piece of original music that tunes into nature, and helps to highlight the need for a new relationship with the natural environment, while providing vital support for young creative practitioners.

The 2021 winner Ceitidh Mac says: *"I am grateful to have been selected for the Tune Into Nature Music Prize. There's definitely a growing urgency to look after the planet and ourselves. Finding a way to feel connected to nature in whatever form is only going to help! It's lush to see that music in a subtle way and this Prize can help."*

Ceitidh Mac, originally from rural Wales and now based in Newcastle, has been selected as the winner of this year's Prize for her entry *Birds*. Written during the national lockdown across the UK, the song was inspired by the time the artist had to focus on and tune into the sounds of birds in the city. As the traffic slowed, Ceitidh, like many of us throughout the recent pandemic, had the space and time to notice all the forms of nature that surround us, and that may have gone unnoticed or listened to previously.

Ceitidh explains: *"The cyclical comfort of the seasons was disrupted, and it left a strange feeling of slowing down in spring, which is normally the time everything is waking up! It's also about appreciating that there is nature in urban surroundings that we can soak up. Nature really matters to me as it connects us, sustains us and teaches us"*.

The artist will receive a financial grant to support new work, the opportunity to perform at Timber Festival in the National Forest in 2022, and a remix with Tileyard London produced by Principal Martyn Ware (Human League and Heaven 17), who says: *"Music is a great way to celebrate nature. As an artist and an activist myself I have loved being in the judging panel over the last two years. I've seen some exceptional entries for this special competition, like no other that aims to increase references to nature in contemporary music. I'm very much looking forward to working with Ceitidh to create an exciting remix, and I hope the work of all our shortlist encourages more young creatives to create their own original songs that explore the important and timely issues surrounding nature"*.

Sarah Bird and Rowan Cannon, Directors of Timber Festival, said: *'Ceitidh is a worthy winner of this year's Tune Into Nature Music Prize! We love that she was inspired to write her beautiful song Birds during the national lockdown last year. That period of time caused us all to pause and take stock of what's really important, which of course includes the natural world around us. We can't wait to see her performance at Timber next year.'*

The Prize began in 2020 and was developed and conceived by Miles Richardson, Professor of Human Factors and Nature Connectedness at the University of Derby. The Nature Connectedness Research Group at the University discovered that connections between young people and nature decreases during teenage years before taking more than a decade to recover. Findings have also revealed that references to nature in contemporary music have decreased consistently since the 1950s. Miles and his team highlight the importance of having a close connection with nature, which helps both the wellbeing of people and our planet. Their research shows that those who are tuned into nature are more likely to care for it and take more action towards the climate and environment emergencies.

Miles says: *"Birds by Ceitidh captures the spirit of the Tune Into Nature Music Prize really well. It came to be through tuning in into the birds of the city and asks, 'Where does your mind go, when you slow down'? Yet, the music is alive and has a celebratory tone that speaks of the joy and essential wellbeing everyday moments with nature can bring."*

In addition to Ceitidh's overall winning song, this year three further selected entrants have been awarded the Tune Into Nature Highly Commended Prize, and will each receive a small grant to support their work. These winners include Flo Perlin, a contemporary Folk singer-songwriter from London with Iraqi and Belarusian heritage; Newcastle-based composer, vocalist, and musical omnivore Catch The Sparrow, and Rohith Sakthy, a singer who was introduced to Indian Carnatic music from the age of four in Kerala, India.

All of the winners were selected by a judging panel comprising of musicians Martyn Ware, Sam Lee, Supriya Nagarajan, poet Zena Edwards; Prof. Miles Richardson of the Nature Connectedness Research Group and Dr Simon Lesley, Course Director of BA (Hons) Popular Music at Birmingham City University; Helen Pheby, Head of Curatorial Programme at YSP and Damon Jackson-Waldock, Oak Project Creative Producer.

The judges were impressed by the many entries inspired by simple connections with the nature that surrounds us. The judges express their gratitude to everyone who took part, and give special thanks to the final shortlisted artists, including Altea Narici, Becca James, Lucy Wylde, Wanderland, Willow Changelings and Yeti's Breakfast.



Tune Into Nature Highly Commended Prize Awardees, left to right, Flo Perlin, Catch The Sparrow (© Tia Ylinen), and Rohith Sakthy. All photos courtesy of the artists.

Listen to Ceitidh Mac's winning entry – *Birds*

The three Highly Commended Prize Awardees' songs can be listened to below:

I am a Rock by Flo Perlin

Winnowing by Catch The Sparrow

Hasrat by Rohith Sakthy

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

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Open seven days a week, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Booking essential, via ysp.org.uk

About Ceitidh Mac

Ceitidh is the gaelic spelling of Katie, inherited from the Scottish side of Mac's family, coming from the Outer Hebrides. Growing up in rural Wales, she now lives in of Newcastle. Mac blends the warming tones of the cello and soaring vocals to create a transformative sound that puts a progressive twist on the alt.folk genre. While the folk influence is prominent in her songs, amalgamation is where Mac finds inspiration – it's combined with a contemporary electronic edge and smokey style, embellished by unusual instrumentation; a folk/jazz crossover, aligning her with artists such as Jesca Hoop, Joni Mitchell and This is The Kit.

In 2021 her work *hase* received local and national support from BBC Introducing and is played on BBC Radio 6 Music as well as being A-Listed by Amazing Radio. This summer Ceitidh released her EP *I Reach for the Pen this summer*. Working with producer Calum Howard (The Dawdler) and recorded by Sam Grant (Richard Dawson, Pigsx7) it further carves the way for her innovative sound. Mac supported Maximo Park at the Unity Arena in September of 2020, which was the first socially distanced arena in the world, and has also supported alt.folk hero Rachael Dadd, progressive jazzers GetThe Blessing, as well as the likes of Laura Misch and Dublin folk legends Lankum.

www.ceitidhmac.com | Instagram and Twitter: @ceitidh_mac

About the Oak Project

The Oak Project is a programme that explores our relationship with the natural world and builds connection to nature through arts, culture and creativity. This initiative aims to inspire and motivate public action for nature and climate in up to almost half a million people through its first year of programming.

The Oak Project has been developed in response to recent psychological research, which demonstrates that art can play an important role in motivating people to take action to protect the environment by building a sense of connection to nature.

The Tune Into Nature Music Prize is a strand of artistic programming by the Oak Project, a newly established partnership between YSP, the University of Derby and the Bronze Oak Project Ltd, a not-for-profit that promotes contact with the arts to create nature connection. Over the next five years, the partnership aims to inspire and motivate public action for nature and climate through arts, culture and creativity, and this Prize is a great way to celebrate nature and promote its essential role in our lives to more young people aged 16-29.

www.oakproject.org.uk | Instagram @oakprojectuk | Twitter: @theoakprojectuk

About the Nature Connectedness Research Group, University of Derby

The Nature Connectedness Research Group aims to understand people's sense of their relationship with the natural world. They create everyday interventions in order to improve this relationship for the wellbeing of humans and nature. By understanding and improving people's connection to nature, the group aims to bring about associated benefits in wellbeing and pro-nature behaviours. The group's research has been honoured in the UK's 100 Best Breakthroughs list, compiled by Universities UK, for its pioneering work looking at people's sense of their relationship with the natural world.

www.derby.ac.uk/NCxRG | Twitter: @findingnature

About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is one of the finest places in Europe to experience modern and contemporary sculpture in the open air. It is situated in Wakefield, the city to have had the world's first recognised nature reserve, as established by Charles Waterton at Walton Hall in 1821. We host work by some of the world's most well-known artists from Yorkshire-born Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Damien Hirst to Phyllida Barlow, Huma Bhabha, Gavin Turk, Ai Weiwei and many other major international and emerging artists across 500 acres of 18th century-designed landscape and six galleries. YSP welcomes around 500,000 visitors every year to enjoy and experience art, the landscape and our heritage and each year 40,000 people have contact with our learning programmes. Founded in 1977, YSP is an independent charitable trust and registered museum.

www.ysp.org.uk | Instagram: @YSPsculpture | Twitter: @YSPsculpture

About Zena Edwards

For 27 years, Zena has been a professional writer/poet performer, facilitator, creative project developer and vocalist after graduating from Middlesex University. She studied storytelling and performance at The London International School for Performing Arts and is published in several anthologies including Margaret Busby's *Daughters of Africa*, Second Edition and *Dance the Guns to Silence* (Flippedeye publishing). Zena is a passionate advocate for environmental issues, decolonisation, race and power and has been mentoring young and emerging artists in professional artist's development and creative campaigning since 2010. As a multidisciplinary collaborator, Zena supported the late great Hugh Masekal and Baaba Maal, has worked as a consultant with internationally acclaimed choreographer and dancer Akram Khan (Xenos), and has collaborated with Visual Artist – Theaster Gates (Soul Manufacturing Company), radical Film Maker Fahim Alam, (Riots Reframed), and The Last Poets.

www.zenaedwards.com | Instagram: @zena_e_poetics | Twitter: @ZenaEdwards

About Supriya Nagarajan and Mamasamitra

Supriya Nagarajan, a Bombay born Indian musician, who studied Carnatic Vocal music from the age of five, is the founding member and CEO of Manasamitra, a UK based arts organisation. Her passionate love of music drove her to achieve great things and the desire to help people from all backgrounds to find that passion within themselves. Having built up a successful career in the banking sector it was in 2005 that Supriya founded Manasamitra as a way of fulfilling her passion for music and presenting traditional and contemporary Indian art, giving UK audiences an ambience of India, its tradition and culture.

www.manasamitra.com | Instagram: @manasamitrauk | Twitter: @manasamitraUK

About Martyn Ware

Born in 1956 in Sheffield, Martyn formed the Human League in 1978 and the multimillion selling act Heaven 17 and British Electric Foundation in 1980. As record producer and artist, he has featured on recordings totalling over 50 million sales worldwide during a 40-year career to date. Heaven 17 and BEF continue to tour and thrive. Martyn founded Illustrious Co. Ltd. with Vince Clarke in 2000 to exploit the creative and commercial possibilities of their unique 3DAudioScape immersive sound technology in collaboration with fine artists, the performing arts and corporate clients around the world. He also lectures extensively and is Principal of Tileyard Education, and curates a large range of leading arts events. Martyn is also a Visiting Professor at Queen Mary College, University of London, a member of BAFTA, a board member of The Ivor's Academy, and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts. He is a Visiting Professor and DSc at University of London and is the first ambassador for In Place Of War.

Instagram: @waremartyn | Twitter: @martynware

About Tileyard London and North

"Tileyard... a central pillar of the UK music industry" Music Business Worldwide

Tileyard London is the largest professional creative community in the world, based in London's Kings Cross. Home to over 100 recording studios, 250 creative industry businesses and more than 1,200 creative professionals. Current residents of Tileyard London include Joel Corry, Sigala, Noel Gallagher, Sister Bliss, The Prodigy, Spitfire Audio, Platoon, Apple Radio, Marathon Artists, Sound Advice, Focusrite and many more.

In an exciting move representing significant investment, regeneration and job creation, Tileyard's founders have begun work on their second site Tileyard North, based in Wakefield. Tileyard North will be a 135,000 sqft creative industries gem, based at Rutland Mills which, when re-generation is completed, will transform the site

into the UK's largest creative community outside of London and will without doubt put Wakefield on the map as the 'new creative destination in the North of England'. The regeneration plan will convert the space into a mixed-use, inclusive, creative and cultural cluster with world class facilities. The site is situated directly opposite the David Chipperfield's Hepworth Gallery named 'the most significant and exciting place for sculpture in Europe'. This is the first Tileyard expansion outside of London.

www.tileyard.co.uk | www.tileyardeducation.co.uk | www.tileyardnorth.co.uk

Instagram: @tileyardlondon | Twitter: @TileyardLondon

About Sam Lee

Sam Lee plays a unique role in the British music scene. A highly inventive and original singer, folk song interpreter, a passionate conservationist, committed song collector and a successful creator of live events. Alongside his organisation The Nest Collective and fellow collaborators, Sam has shaken up the live music scene breaking the boundaries between folk and contemporary music and the assumed place and way folksong is heard. He's injected a renewed passion into this old material, helping to develop its ecosystem by not only inviting in a new listenership but also interrogating what the messages in these old songs hold for us today. With his forthcoming album, *Old Wow*, he's summonsed up a truly compelling and emotional album that takes his work to yet another level.

www.samleesong.co.uk | Instagram and Twitter: @samleesong

About Simon Lesley

Simon Lesley is a Doctor of Music, Composer and Higher Education Lecturer with 19 years teaching experience. He is Course Director of Birmingham City University's BA (Honours) Popular Music degree and External Examiner at The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, London.

About Timber Festival

Timber (Friday 1 - Sunday 3 July 2022) is an immersive and revitalising weekend festival in the National Forest celebrating our relationship with the natural world through carefully curated musical performances, installations, debates and workshops, created by Wild Rumpus in partnership with The National Forest Company. Music, art, and ideas weave together during this three-day camping festival tucked away at Feanedock, a 70-acre woodland site near Ashby de la Zouch in the heart of the National Forest.

Spanning 200 square miles of the Midlands, the National Forest is the first forest to be created at scale in England for over 1,000 years. For three days in July, new thinkers, activists, makers, artists, musicians and writers gather to play, provoke and inspire as we explore our complex and rewarding relationship with nature.

www.timberfestival.org.uk | Instagram @timberfestival | Twitter @timber_festival

Project Partners:

