



the National Trust for Scotland

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Singer-songwriter releases St Kilda-inspired songs for anniversaries

Aberdeenshire singer songwriter Jenny Sturgeon has just released a collection of songs inspired by St Kilda, as the National Trust for Scotland prepares to mark 60 years of caring for the dual heritage site.

The Wren and the Salt Air is the culmination of a project between the National Trust for Scotland and Scottish singer-songwriter Jenny Sturgeon.

In 2016 St Kilda, the most remote archipelago in the British Isles, celebrated its 30th anniversary of receiving World Heritage Site status for natural criteria. As part of the celebrations for this anniversary singer-songwriter Jenny Sturgeon was commissioned to write a series of pieces of music inspired by the archipelagos' wildlife and history.

The record is released as the Trust and the islands mark another anniversary – St Kilda was bequeathed to the charity that conserves and promotes Scotland's heritage 60 years ago.

With dramatic cliffs, a wealth of human history, changeable weather and a mass of animal life, including a seabird population of over half a million birds and its own sub-species of wren and mouse, St Kilda and its history have long captured the interest of people across the globe. It was in 1930 that the last St Kildans left the island of Hirta.

Today the National Trust for Scotland the archipelago and work in partnership to further a continuing programme of conservation and research on the islands, to ensure the care and protection of this World Heritage Site.

Susan Bain, Western Isles Manager for the National Trust for Scotland said: "The St Kildans drew inspiration from the landscape and wildlife around them to compose songs and melodies and I'm delighted that Jenny has continued this tradition. As a World Heritage Site St Kilda has value to all of humanity and music can connect and inspire peoples across the globe regardless of language or culture."

In September 2016 Jenny spent five days on St Kilda exploring the nature, landscape, sounds and history of the islands which make up the archipelago (Hirta, Boreray, Dun and Soay). Taking inspiration from the islands Jenny has created four new pieces of music which celebrate the wildlife and history that makes St Kilda so unique.

Jenny says of her trip to St. Kilda “Being able to explore and get a sense of the nature of St Kilda was humbling – it’s hard not to be inspired by that place! Every island has a unique character and you could spend years there and not see everything it has to offer.”

In writing and recording these pieces Jenny was keen to combine traditional Scottish folk styles with field recordings. All four tracks include field recordings taken on St Kilda including recordings of waves, weather and most importantly, bird calls.

Having previously worked as a seabird biologist, nature is at the forefront of Jenny’s songwriting and this project allowed her to explore the connections between birds and music even further - using her own field recordings from St Kilda and field recordings of composer, ornithologist and author Magnus Robb (The Sound Approach).

Jenny says: “Three of the tracks take inspiration from bird species I’ve seen on visits to St Kilda. I wanted to reflect these encounters in the melody and lyrics of the pieces, as well as through using field recordings of these birds. I was delighted when Magnus got involved with the project - It was great fun putting bird calls and the music together!”

The Wren and the Salt Air is available to buy now at: <https://jennysturgeon.bandcamp.com/> on download and limited edition CD. Ten per cent of profits from the CD go to support conservation work on St Kilda.

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Editor’s Notes:

A selection of images are available for download at:
<https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/324a4N>

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