

Sarah Smith

Sarah Smith – LONG BIO

There are few artists who exude the depth of passion, spirit and talent as London, Ontario's Sarah Smith does on a stage or in a recording studio. Music is more than a vocation for Smith: it is her calling. The combination of her extraordinary personal magnetism, breathtakingly emotive voice and empowering music has created an impressive following of devoted fans and true buzz on the Canadian independent music scene.

Smith lives music, loves music – it imbues every fibre of her being and the result of this all-encompassing devotion to her craft is a catalogue of compelling songs that are deeply personal and revelatory, and mesmerizing in their soul-bearing sincerity – especially in a live setting.

“I am just so blessed. I can't believe how much I have filled my life with music. Although I have been trying to slow down a bit, I just have this incredible urge to play music. I really love it. Even when I am off the road, something else comes along, like a recording session or I am writing with someone else, or working on a music video. I am always busy with music and I love every second of it,” Smith said.

A working musician her entire adult life, after paying her dues in a number of different bands Smith came to prominence as the frontwoman and primary songwriter for the popular rock act The Joys – a staple on the Canadian club and festival scene beginning in 2005. .

The Joys had songs that charted nationally on Canadian college radio, and won Best Rock Act at the Jack Richardson Music Awards two years in a row. The music of The Joys has also been licensed to everything from Sony Playstation to Teletoon, OUT TV and Chris & John's Road Trip. And sales of more than 15,000 albums, primarily off the stage, landed them opening slots for the likes of The Trews, Sloan, Thornley, Big Sugar, Sam Roberts, Kim Mitchell, Robert Plant and Finger Eleven among others.

Seeking a more solitary and introspective creative outlet, Smith boldly stepped out as a solo artist in 2012 and has released three critically-

acclaimed CDs, 2012s *Stronger Now*, 2014s *The Journey*, and an artistic masterpiece, *11*, which was released in 2016. Also on the list of releases for 2018 were a LIVE CD as well as a Christmas CD titled *A Christmas Wish*. She also released a live DVD in 2015 and has built a substantial and ever-growing audience through more than 250 live performances a year – including becoming an in-demand artist throughout portions of Central Europe.

“I just played a few shows over there and one good show leads to another and the next thing you know there are agents and club owners and even fans calling you trying to get you to play in their town. I think people see that I am legitimate, that I am very passionate about what I do and that the songs and my emotional performance of those songs really connects with people – no matter what language they speak. The fans in places like Germany and Luxembourg and the Netherlands have been so amazing to me,” she said, adding that she continues to work hard at spreading her fan base throughout the rest of Europe and into the U.K.

Her albums feature songs that are emblematic of Smith’s remarkable ability to mine the depths of her heart and soul to create music that is profoundly moving, inspiring and instantly memorable. Songs from it were compelling enough to draw interest from Los Angeles film director Marina Rice Bader, who featured Smith’s music in her compelling film *Anatomy of A Love Seen*. The CBC series *Cracked* also featured some of Sarah's songs.

“I am the worst songwriter because I just write about me and my feelings, my experiences, my emotions and my relationships. I write about my battle with drugs, my newfound inner spirituality and my pain. So it’s kind of like therapy,” she said. “The song *Stars* is about wanting to hit the road with someone you love and getting lost together – kind of like *Thelma and Louise*. *Into The Light* is about the deconstruction of an old relationship and rebuilding it back up into something new and better. Then there’s a song like *Empty Void*, which is literally about an empty spiritual void that I have tried to fill inside me. It’s a plea to my partner to just hang tight while I go off and try to find something to fill that void; that I will be back and when I do come back, I will know so much more about myself.”

Although Smith has only been a solo artist for a few years, her lifetime as a touring musician, the rigours of the road, a roller-coaster ride of a personal life, battles with demons, defeats and disappointments has shaped her into the strong, self-assured artist that she is today. A fixture on the southern Ontario music scene, Smith has been repeatedly rewarded for her skill, talent and prowess as a songwriter and performer.

She has been named Best Singer Songwriter at both the London Music Awards and Jack Richardson Music Awards on numerous occasions, as well as Best Rock Artist and Fan Favourite. She was also named the Best Adult Contemporary Artist at the Toronto Independent Music Awards in 2015. As a solo performer, Smith has shared the stage with the likes of Emm Gryner, The Tea Party, Bif Naked and more. She is also fiercely independent, running all aspects of her business operation as well as the creative side. And while she is admittedly not comfortable as a music business schmoozer, she is adept at making the connections she feels are most important – with music fans.

Growing up in a deeply religious home, Smith's earliest musical education came from child-oriented hymn books and spiritual songs. In high school she heard Alanis Morissette's explosive and ground-breaking Jagged Little Pill album and, after acquiring her first guitar, a torrent of music began to flow out from her.

"I joined the Columbia House CD club and I remember some of the first CDs I got were by Bryan Adams, The Cars, Chicago's Greatest Hits, Extreme's Pornograffitti, Celine Dion ... I was just trying to catch up. Then when I was 18 I went to New Zealand on what was supposed to be a school exchange, but I never went to school. I just played music and travelled around. While there I got into the music that was on the radio, including Crowded House," she explained.

"I also went through this whole phase where I developed addictions and habits with alcohol and drugs – just living what I thought was the rock and roll lifestyle. I guess I was angry and rebellious, but I guess I survived and outgrew all that and am now channelling that energy, frustration and emotion into music. I guess music is my new addiction."

And it is an addiction that Smith continues to share from coast to coast in Canada as well as with her burgeoning fan base in Europe. As a solo artist, in a duo or full band configuration, Smith commands the attention of concert goers with her riveting personal charm, her infectious energy, her compelling songs, and a voice that never wavers in its emotional honesty, it's power and its darkly sweet elegance.

It is an experience not to be missed.