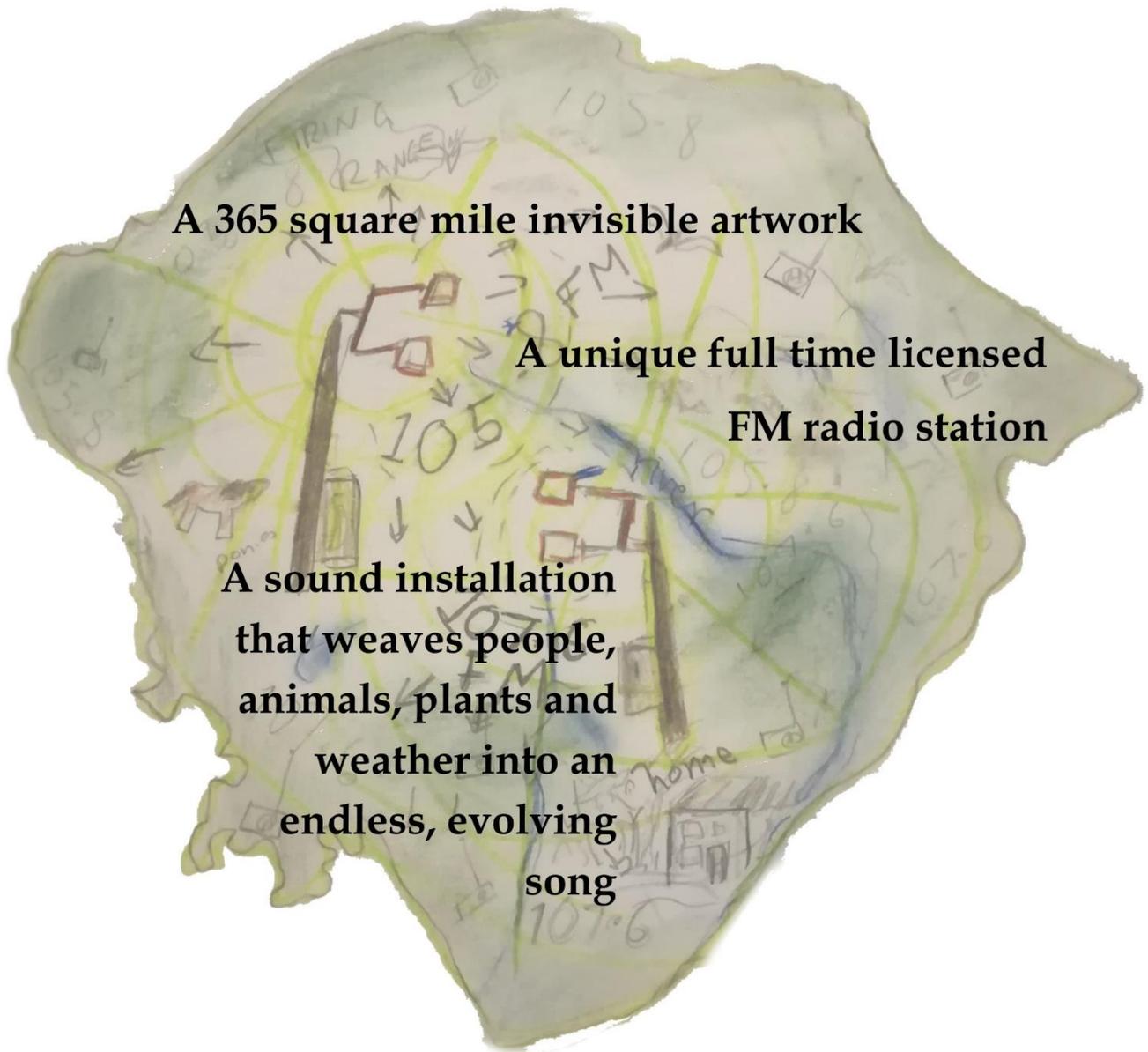




In the fairest county of England, for so has
Devonshire been with justice styled,
surrounded by land smiling under the hand of
cultivation, is situated the wild stretch of hill-
country known as Dartmoor.

William Crossing, 1891, *The Land of Stream and Tor*



A 365 square mile invisible artwork

**A unique full time licensed
FM radio station**

**A sound installation
that weaves people,
animals, plants and
weather into an
endless, evolving
song**

Immediate release

2 December 2020

Giant sound installation for Dartmoor residents goes live

It may be a full time licensed radio station, but that is where the convention of a new artwork for Dartmoor ends. The creation of composer Lucinda Guy, its studio is 365 square miles and it's only DJ is a computer algorithm.

Skylark, which began broadcasting on 105.8 and 107.6 FM in November 2020, can only be heard by the people of Dartmoor National Park (it is not available online) thereby reflecting the voices of all the moor's inhabitants back to them.

Ed Baxter, Resonance FM:

'Genius idea, inspiring location – the future of radio'

Sarah Washington, Mobile Radio:

'More than just an irregular and innovative radio station, Skylark is in fact a giant sound installation. It feels like you could be dropping in on any point in history, tuning in to timeless people intertwined with wildlife and elemental forces across the mercurial moor. Each leaving their imprints on the other, and on the listeners, many of whom will find themselves drawn to become immortalised within this localised mythic space of poetic fragments, melodic markers, and atmospheric trails.'

Skylark's creator, **Lucinda Guy**:



'Over five years of planning, imagining, daydreaming, composing and chatting, I have been trying to solve the puzzle of how to achieve this in a way that absolutely is radio – socially, culturally, legally. How to get a full time FM radio licence, and fit all the legislative criteria, whilst doing everything differently.'

Undeterred by COVID-19 and grey skies, Guy and a team of engineers, artists and computer programmers have been installing transmitters on high ground while maintaining social distancing and giving recording boxes to local residents to be ready for going live this month.



Skylark blends the scripted and unscripted, clean sound on professional microphones with rough on a cassette tape or phones, the outdoors with echoey village halls, new content and archive. And it enlists the human ear and brain to make sense of whatever material appears together.

Many of the beautiful, immersive recordings of Dartmoor's wildlife are produced by Skylark's chairperson, Tony Whitehead, a Dartmoor based artist with an interest in the sounds of the natural environment, especially bird-song. The lockdown of spring 2020 provided Tony with a unique opportunity to record on his daily walks, when the absence of traffic allowed animal voices to be heard more clearly.

Tony Whitehead, Skylark chairperson:

'I love recording the sounds of Dartmoor, particularly its wildlife, through the seasons and over the years. It's an ever-changing soundscape, and it's great to be able to share the voices of the moor, along with the recordings of many other people, on Skylark.'

Dr Michael Punt, professor of art and technology, University of Plymouth:

'Skylark is an adventure that will engage a distributed community in the production of a version of cultural identity in a region most known through the idealization of its tors, picnic sites and ponies. And that seems to be a good idea (especially at the moment as some fairly basic expectations about the future are becoming slippery). Skylark redefines Dartmoor as a community that can speak for itself through its undivided attention to the sounds of place and people. In this creative collaboration with its users it has the potential to give voice to the previously unheard and also shift the nature of radio as a technological form away from the familiar to something that may surprise us.'

Dr Hannah Drayson, University of Plymouth:

Far from being simply an avant-garde experiment, Skylark is the result of a long engagement with questions about the nature and form of community broadcast. Its broadcast acts as an invitation, the talk-show radio studio with its mic and sound-desk set up, with glass booth and recording light has been disposed of. It has melted into the landscape in favour of material gathered through a network of community projects, workshops, audio-recorders in boxes, archival material, snippets of instrumental performance, artists submissions, and roaming radio producers. The result is not quite the moor 'talking' to itself, but more reinforcing its own presence, sonic moments running through temporal wormholes, to produce a revisioning and reinforcement of the moor's own atmosphere. Where else do radio transmitters function to send an atmosphere back into itself?

Samantha Hill, head of communications, Dartmoor National Park:

'This is a great initiative and I'd like to wish Skylark every success. Connecting Dartmoor's communities is so important, now more than ever, as people feel isolated due to the ongoing pandemic. This radio station will bring that community voice into people's homes with a rich tapestry of sound.'

-ends-

Full press pack with live listen, extended reviews, images and audio at <https://skylark.fm/preview>

Password: Buzzard

Contact: Lucinda Guy lucinda@skylark.fm 07599412010



Notes to editors

About Skylark

Skylark is a unique FM radio station for Dartmoor that began broadcasting in 2020 that gives voice to the landscape. An ever-changing and continuous broadcast weaves together oral histories, new music, and live audio streams from people, animals, plants and weather into an endless and evolving song. It can only be heard in Dartmoor National Park or nearby on 105.8 or 107.6 FM.

Skylark has a full time community radio licence from Ofcom (Office of Communications). Community Radio stations have been licensed in the UK since 2004, and there are now several hundred across the country. Stations typically play output produced by local volunteers, and fulfil social gain objectives, such as delivering training, and giving voice to those otherwise less heard from on radio.

Lead Artist

Lucinda Guy is a composer and sound artist exploring broadcast radio as a space for democratic participation and creative expression. She is a researcher with Transtechnology Research at the University of Plymouth, looking into automation in radio art practice. She is the creator of numerous works for radio and live performance, encompassing ritual, song, improvisation, and participation, frequently drawing on hymns and traditional music and enquiring into landscape and ritual. Since 2006 she has been artistic director of Soundart Radio, the community station for the Totnes area of South Devon. She lives on the edge of Dartmoor with her partner and colleague Chris Booth, and their four children.



Technical information



Skylark was devised in 2015 and launched in 2020 by composer Lucinda Guy to push the boundaries of FM community radio as an artwork, with an application for a full time FM licence submitted to Ofcom in 2017 and granted the following year.

Broadcast by two 200w FM transmitters fitted on hill top locations, the stations' output on 105.8 and 6106.7 FM is only available to people living or visiting the moor.

Skylark broadcasts a layered sequence of recordings, randomly chosen by computer algorithm, based at Guy's home on the edge of Dartmoor. Although selection is automated, the listeners' mind magically generates multiple meanings at each juxtaposition of content.

Small and subtle musical compositions are the thread that sews the continuous piece together. A wide variety of acoustic instruments play single notes, sighing chords and short phrases, which are all restricted to a simple mode of just seven notes. And in the spirit of early cyberneticians, the algorithm that combines them is extraordinarily simple, although it appears to make sensitive, informed decisions about juxtaposition.

Contributors: Skylark's community of makers and listeners

Skylark is deeply rooted in the Dartmoor landscape and community. The station only broadcasts sounds captured within its licensed area, and no copyright material such as popular music. And it is only available to listen within its licensed area with no online access.

The contributors to this eternal song are the moor's people, animals, plants and weather. Field recordings of the natural ecology of Dartmoor. Pre-recorded interviews, poems and readings are drawn from local archives, including the Valiant Soldier Museum and Aune Head Arts, and

from previous community radio collaborations with Soundart Radio, Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Sustainable South Brent and other local groups.

New content is being contributed by Dartmoor residents, and community organisations, and four Dartmoor residential care homes, with support work and guidance currently funded by the government's Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by the National Lottery.

The project actively seeks and supports contributions from specific residents, initially older people living in Dartmoor's care homes. Residents in four care homes for older people in South Brent, Buckfastleigh, Moretonhampstead and Princetown were gifted with hand painted memory boxes to stimulate conversation, an FM radio and sound recording equipment with instructions.



So far over 100 people have already been involved in recording their voices, sounds of nature and music.. The station's website, skylark.fm hosts texts and musical scores, and an upload portal to easily submit user generated content.

Dartmoor, which was designated as a National Park in 1951, is home to 34,000 people. Skylark sings of the open moorland and wooded valleys, but also of everyday life in its towns, villages, farms and industry, encompassing the sounds of shops, car alarms, buses, playgrounds, kitchens and bathrooms. From bronze age settlements to new age witches; families who have been there for generations, or moved there yesterday; farmers and conservationists. Skylark seeks to represent a pluralist picture of Dartmoor life, where many views and experiences can sound together.