

# Review: Laura Marling at The Caves (4th Feb 2015)



As diluted folk music seeps its way into the mainstream music chart, there has become a rather blurry middle ground between obscurity and intense fame. Very few people occupy it, but the adoring and attentive fans of **Laura Marling** prove she might just be the doyenne of this niche folk field.

As she took to the stage of The Caves on Niddry Street, the audience erupted into rapturous applause and cheers, before respectfully hushing as her fingers touched the strings – we were treated to a tender performance.

The intimacy of Marling's venue choices as she previews her latest album, **Short Movie**, removes the rather echoed lifelessness that can sometimes come with the bigger venues she's now popular enough to play. There's no stage doors or security lined barriers; just stone archways and simple spotlights. In this instance, the tiny crowd are transfixed to her voice through its sympathetic and ferocious tones.

Regardless of her chosen setlist, Marling will always be one to please her own crowd. Her hour and forty five minute set was brimming with excerpts from her entire discography, omitting one album: her debut. With haunting passion, she delivers a stunning rendition of 'Rambling Man' from *I Speak Because I Can*; the crowd singing hushed under their breath in order to not detract from her already delicate vocals.

From *A Creature I Don't Know*, her hejira towards the Americana tinged music she's now becoming known for, she rattles out 'Salinas' and 'The Muse' with a sense of fearless bravery. As she pulls 'Master Hunter' from her last record, you realise that Laura Marling doesn't play politely by anyone's rules.

The lady crafts her set list without a panel of business and PR bigwigs demanding that she includes 'Ghosts' for 'the fans'.

Our favourite inclusion? A taut and mesmerising rendition of 'What He Wrote', a wartime story of broken fidelity, the emotion transferring from record to stage as she adopts the torn woman's voice and quietly admits, "I miss his smell."

Her next effort, due for release on March 23rd, was teased upon several times, suggesting an amalgamated sound of her previous work. Whilst the percussion heavy strong willed songs such as 'False Hope' hone back to *Once I Was An Eagle*, the delicate 'Walk Alone' is reminiscent of the lonesome beauty of 'Blackberry Stone'. It almost reduces you to tears as she confesses her romantic instinct: "I was put upon this earth/ Not by any god or master / But to love you somehow."

At the still young age of 25, it can be almost assured that Laura Marling has five stunning collections of finely crafted folk under her belt. However, what is irrefutable is her ability to have a crowd stand, mouths agape, as she exposes herself through inspired lyricism. Both singing and staring longingly into the light that deservedly shines upon her.

**Laura Marling's fifth album Short Movie will be released on March 23rd 2015**