

Oakes & Smith

Oakes and Smith perform an acoustic mix of folk and pop with voices blending in close harmonies. They sing soothing and soulful tunes inspired by nature, love, spirit, art and poetry. The harmonious blend of their voices creates an ethereal sound and unique quality not often heard in today's popular music, and their songs evoke a sense of wonder, expressing themes such as love, beauty, innocence and mystery. Their debut album, *First Flight*, released in November 2013, has been received warmly by listeners and critics alike.

"...a beautiful folk effort with lush, multi-instrumental arrangements and stunning melodies in their vocal duets." —Brian Lion, *Under the Gun Review*

"*First Flight* is full of descriptive storytelling and flawless harmonies...it is a beautiful record rich with feeling..." —Laurie Fanelli, *Veggie Fans*

"Oakes and Smith have the ability to bring a sense of calm and ease to the air...with songs so full of wisdom and true emotions...a true representation of what real, pure, talent should sound like."
— Kylee Colvin, *The Levity Ball*

In summer 2014, Oakes and Smith will be appearing at The Guthrie Center's Troubadour Series in Great Barrington, MA; opening for The Boxcar Lilies at the NJ Folk Project's Minstrel Acoustic Concert Series in Morristown, NJ; performing at FloydFest in Floyd, VA; among many other appearances near their home in Western Massachusetts and beyond.

Both Robert Oakes and Katherine Smith were born into musical families and started performing and writing at a very young age. Katherine, whose grandfather, great aunts and uncles, father and mother all sang, started harmonizing as a teenager with her parents' Connecticut-based choral group. She then went on to perform musical theater pieces and jazz and pop songs in high school and college productions. Robert began as a kid singing and playing bass guitar in his blues-and-jazz-singing father's band. Later, he sang and played in countless garage bands with his brother and friends from surrounding New Jersey towns before going on to self-produce several albums of original songs and perform in many New York City-area venues.

They both relocated to the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts, a peaceful place filled with natural and cultural beauty, which very much influences their sound and creative process. Ever since their first – unexpected – meeting there during the summer of 2007, they have both felt like there were unseen hands drawing them together to create something more than each were doing on their own. Since then, they have continued to let themselves be led along a path of collaboration, staying open and saying 'yes' to the possibilities it offered. They tried out the duo act idea for the first time in 2010 at a performance workshop in New York City led by singer and teacher Joy Askew (Peter Gabriel, Joe Jackson, Laurie Anderson), who reacted very favorably to their sound. Encouraged, they continued arranging existing material for their two voices and also writing new songs together, and the Oakes and Smith duo was born.

Their debut album *First Flight*, released independently in November 2013, features a varied cast of players and a powerful, collaborative production team. The project was started at The Isokon Studio in Woodstock, NY where D. James Goodwin (Norah Jones, Kaki King) and Eli Walker engineered. Later, Jason Loughlin (Amos Lee, Rachael Yamagata, Lesley Gore) joined the project, helping with production, editing and playing electric guitar. The album was mixed by Oz Fritz, who, among many other accolades, worked on the Grammy award-winning album *Mule Variations* by Tom Waits. The album was mastered by Garrett Haines, who mastered a song on the Grammy-winning compilation album, *All About Bullies...Big and Small*. Throughout the final phase of production, Oakes and Smith were assisted by Jemal Wade Hines of the band HuDost.

For more information, visit www.oakesandsmith.net