

This Spring, gentle folk alchemists **The Brothers Gillespie** from Northumberland will be on tour with their third album **The Merciful Road**, a collection of songs inspired by the grace of life in troubled times and recorded in a cottage by the banks of the river Tweed. **Folk London** have called it *'one of the finest albums you will hear this year'* while **Irish Music Magazine** has said that *'An intimate sense of spiritual grace seeps through each of the 8 tracks'*. Several singles will be appearing ahead of the tour which will also see the album released on vinyl LP. This is the duo's first tour working with renowned folk agency **Alan Bearman Music** and upcoming shows include appearances at the Bury Met, the Greystones in Sheffield, Bluestone Brewery in Newport, London's legendary Water Rats and Sidmouth Folk Festival later in the Summer. With plans also afoot to start work on a new album, the brothers find themselves called by the glint of new horizons and excited to see where the road will take them.

James and Sam Gillespie found their sound growing up in the fells and valleys of Northumberland, their songs often describing relationships with wild places and the experience of finding oneself in a world alive with soul. The music comes to them most strongly when walking in the borderlands with their packs and instruments, which remains a regular practice for them.

Their live performances are animated by a rare energy, both earthy and ethereal, romantic and radical driven by their lyrical songwriting, multi-instrumentalism and *'the glorious tones of their blood harmony'* **Sam Lee**. *'Anyone who has seen the brothers live will surely attest that it is an experience that will stay with you. There is a feeling of warmth that exudes from them and affects everyone in the room'* **Folk London**.

Their previous album *The Fell* was described as *'weaving an especially compelling magic'* and *'showing British acoustic music in its best possible light'* **Folk Radio UK**. They have played at Cambridge and Sidmouth Folk Festivals and opened for Lankum and Sam Lee. They were one of the English Folk Expo's featured artists of 2021 and appeared in the English Heritage 'Songs of England' recording and video series.

Thanks to a grant to develop their creative practice from the Arts Council they spent some of the lockdown honing their recording and production skills and **The Merciful Road** is their first self-recorded album putting what they learned into practice. It was recorded in a cottage studio on the banks of the river Tweed where the brother's grandma lived in their childhood. At the heart of the album's rootsy sound are the brothers' vocal harmonies and expressive finger style guitar playing, complimented at times by flourishes of bouzouki, wooden flute, fiddle, gourd banjo and shruti box. Special touches are also added to the texture by several brilliant guest musicians, including Jen Hill (producer of 'Songs of Separation') on double bass, Siannie Moodie on clàrsach (celtic harp) and Mairead Kerr on piano. Producer and recording engineer Tim Lane was also closely involved with the production of the record and his passion for analogue gear brings a rich, vintage magic to the sound that perfectly compliments the songs on the album and the duo's musical vision.

The brothers emerged from the time of lockdowns changed by the experience and with a greater reverence for the joy and privilege of being with an audience in real time and space. This album is in some ways about finding the thread of love and belonging in a world that seems to be nonetheless unravelling.