

# The Guide

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## Sarah McQuaid also joins the folk festival line-up

### Music

Singer-songwriter Sarah McQuaid is a double participant in this year's Southdowns Folk Festival with two visits to the Regis Centre.

In addition to her evening concert at 6pm on Saturday, September 23, Sarah will also be giving a one-hour *Introduction to DADGAD* guitar workshop ([www.sarahmcquaid.com/workshops](http://www.sarahmcquaid.com/workshops) for details) at 11am on Sunday, September 24.

She's looking forward to it. "Playing festivals is a little bit different (to playing concerts on tour) in that it has got advantages and disadvantages.

"The main difference, which is both an advantage and a disadvantage, is that the audience has not come to see you in particular. They have come to see the festival and they might not even have heard of you.

"And that's great in some ways because you get the chance to play to a bunch of people that might not know your music.

"It's a great way to reach out to a new audience. But also it makes your job so much harder.



Sarah

"It heaps up the pressure that you have got to impress straightaway. It means you have really got to rise to the occasion!

"You know that there are people there who are waiting to see lots of other things, and you have got to try to keep them.

"But you know that for whatever reason, there will always be people who will wander off... and that it's not really anything to do with you, just that there is so much to do when you are visiting a festival."

Sarah, who was born in Spain and grew up in the States, has been living in Cornwall for the past ten years, after a spell living in Ireland.

Cornwall was pure chance, for family reasons, she says. But it has worked out wonderfully well for her musically.

"It has transformed my artistic direction. I met a woman called Zoe who had a hit called *Sunshine on a Rairy Day*, and she is a brilliant pop-song writer. She and I got to be friends, and we started writing songs together.

"Prior to meeting her, I was a folk singer that wrote the occasional songs. We did an album together, and that's when things really took off for me with my song-writing."

Her song-writing increased hugely, and now virtually all the material on Sarah's albums is original material of her own: "It is seven years now that I have been really focused on song-writing, and I think I have changed big time. My songs are getting better all the time.

"And I am really excited about the songs on my new album that will come out in January.

"I have got some really good reviews for my song-writing in the past, but I think these songs on the new album really take my song-writing to a new level..."