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Larkin Poe/Georgia Ruth – review

Lexington, London

☆☆☆☆

Robin Denselow

The Guardian, Wednesday 24 July 2013 14.08 EDT

This was an intriguing double bill of very different young female singer-songwriters, all impressive multi-instrumentalists. The headliners, from Atlanta, Georgia, were once two-thirds of the celebrated bluegrass and "progressive acoustic" band [the Lovell Sisters](#); but now they are no longer working with elder sister Jessica, they call themselves [Larkin Poe](#), after a great-great-great grandfather related to [Edgar Allan Poe](#).

Rebecca Lovell plays electric guitar, her sister Megan slide guitar, and on this occasion they were backed by bass and drums for a set dominated by [blues](#) rock. Their impressively slick and apparently effortless vocal and instrumental work was aided by a batch of original songs – many touching on their troubled family history – and by Rebecca's contagious enthusiasm.

But there were suggestions that they are capable of far more. Rebecca switched to mandolin for a powerful, brooding treatment of the spiritual [Wade in the Water](#), their best song of the night. She moved to fiddle for a romping reminder of her [country](#) roots, then it was back to efficient – if more predictable – electric guitar duets on bluesy songs, such as [Jailbreak](#).

[Georgia Ruth](#), who opened, was even more impressive. She has a pure, thoughtful voice, sounding at times like a contemporary Welsh answer to [Sandy Denny](#), and sat to accompany herself on the harp and then the reed organ, surrounded by a three-piece electric band. She started with a slow self-composed love song, [Mapping](#), followed by the melancholy, harmonica-backed American folk song [Old Blue](#). Then she unleashed her band for the upbeat, chugging [Week of Pines](#), with harp and electric guitar working remarkably well together; before switching direction yet again, with the sturdy and melodic Welsh-language sea shanty, [Codi Angor](#).

On this showing, she's one of the British folk discoveries of the year.

- Larkin Poe are at the Cambridge folk festival from 25 to 26 July.
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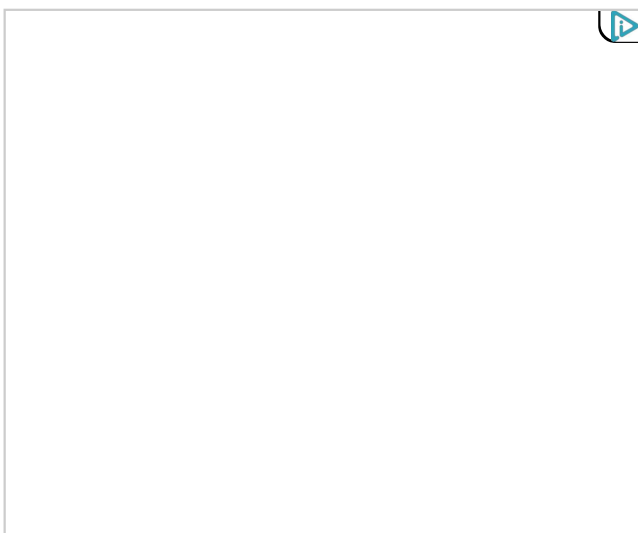
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