

Debut album from John Mathis Utsi *Luohiti vuolgá*

With his debut album Johan Mathis Utsi demonstrates a high level of skill in traditional yoik. A rare musical mind, almost in a class of his own in the performing and relay of yoik to an audience. Not just a masterly performance of yoik, but also with a level of musical ornamentation and phrasing to spice up the yoik. This requires a good deal of background knowledge which is rarely found, says producer Johan Sara jr.

John Mathis Utsi has grown up with yoik and comes from a family that is widely known for their yoik performances. Utsi skills represents the ancient traditional yoik, and at the same time appeals to new listeners with his full and pleasant voice.

The album contains person yoiks from plains and tundras of Finnmark. Some of them are his own and some are new compositions. For example *Hoankabealljit* (see the link to the video) is a reflection on why one chooses the life of a reindeer herder, despite all the hardship.

– It has been important for me to yoik also the young, in order to show that person yoiks are a living tradition, says John Mathis Utsi. – The album also includes a declaration of love that took some time to make the way I wanted it.

Even though Utsi is an experienced stage performer, the studio work was a challenge. Usually yoiks come spontaneously and relates to the present situation.

– It was a surprisingly difficult process in the studio. I spent a lot of time to make the perfect result, and I am satisfied with the album. Still, there are some material in which I did not quite reach the goal, but where the texts are more in focus, says the artist himself.

– Utsi has also performed some very old yoiks, which he masters to the full. A true yoiker that we are very proud of. The album consist of 18 yoiks and we look forward to publishing *Luohiti vuolgá / The yoik leads*, with Utsis outstanding voice and mastery of traditional, classical yoik. The result is an album that commands respect, says the producer Johan Sara jr.

Biography: John Mathis Utsi was born in 1979 and raised in Karasjok. He has won the Sámi Grand Prix both times participating; in 2004 with "Issat Ante" and in 2010 with "Rasstos Jovna". He has yoiked for the Prime minister and the King and Queen of Norway, at the opening of the Sámi Parliament.

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www.stierdna.com johansara@gmail.com Stierdna RLabel /Facebook

www.musikkoperatorene.no

Artist contact: +47 951 75 908 jmutsi22@gmail.com