

What people say about Fay

"I love Fay's poetry and her style. It is so nice to see poets who do not follow the 'slam' style that seems to be spreading from the states! She is one of the few poets around who has managed to keep a softer, gentler approach to performance poetry which is so refreshing in amidst the angry, politically driven words I see so often (including from myself!!!). She is one of the highlights of East of England's poetry scene, Cambridgeshire's sole and hardest working [slam] poetry organisers and, most importantly a cracking performer. This includes her 'in between poems' skills, which have just got better and better through the years whilst she's hosted Hammer and Tongue and her own great night Allographic. We need more poetry like this – but unfortunately this gentler, thoughtful and really beautiful side of performance get overshadowed by shouts over its amazing whispers. She is funny, confident, modest and a really bloody good poet to listen to."

**Hollie McNish, Former Glastonbury Slam
Champion and co-founder of "Page to
Performance"**

"I've seen Fay performing in Cambridge and across the East and Midlands many times – she's fantastic at engaging with an audience, relaxed and charming onstage, and her poetry combines lyrical flair with a solid emotional core. In a scene full of copycats and trend-chasers, there is no one quite like her."

**Tim Clare, author, award-winning
performer, Founder member of "Aisle16"**

"Fay Roberts is an artist who can incorporate the funny, the emotive and the surreal into a single set. We've worked with her as part of our Word's A Stage project, in which we discovered that her narrative skills can run to pieces of longer duration than the span of the average poem. Fay is a tubthumper for the artform, through her work with Poetry Kapow (website and events) and, more recently, programming the spoken word at Edinburgh's Free Fringe. She's a valued part of the UK scene."

**Russell Thompson, performer and
London Programme Co-ordinator, Apples
& Snakes**

"Fay Roberts is a poet, performer, publisher, promoter, presenter and self-confessed logophile. I met her in 2008 when she was the organiser and host of Poetry Kapow! which was, in its time, Milton Keynes' principal poetry performance event. Through Poetry Kapow! and Fay's organisational efforts, a network of local poets became established, which went on to perform at numerous live events across the country. I have supported and performed alongside Fay at the Edinburgh Fringe, The Bedford Jersey Arts Festival, the London Poetry Fringe, Waterside Festival, Stony Live! Rrrants' Bard-Aid and many others, along with innumerable open mics and featured performances in between. I launched Scribal Gathering Music and Poetry Open Mic in February 2010, and Fay performed on the opening night and as a featured performer several times afterwards. I established the Bard of Stony Stratford in 2011, which is an official civic position recognised by the local Town Council, and Fay was instrumental in supporting me with this as part of an expert selection panel of writers and performers.

Fay is an accomplished performer with a distinctive style, which complements any line up of spoken word artists. Her gentle and understated delivery commands the hushed attention of the audience, which is justly rewarded with an eloquent and sensitive soliloquy that soaks up the silence and absorbs the senses, usually hitting you in the heart when your guard is down. Seeing a performance from Fay is like savouring a selection of superb sauvignons while the intoxicating effects seep in unexpectedly and catch you unaware. Fay Roberts is a poet who speaks softly and carries a big stick. That she recites from memory adds to the engagement and enhances the impact."

Richard Frost, Town Bard of Stony Stratford, 2013-2014, founder and host of "Scribal Gathering"

"For me, Fay Roberts is a cool breath of fresh air on the poetry scene. I could watch her perform for hours; she delivers her beautifully chosen words with a compelling, deeply centred confidence and a charisma that makes her a true star."

Sophia Blackwell, poet, author, regular host for Apples & Snakes, Festival darling

"Fay performs her poetry with confidence, passion and an intimate, hypnotic vibe."

Elaine Ewart, Fenland Poet Laureate 2012-2013

"Fay Roberts sings poetry. She is dynamic and lyrical with an innate sense of rhythm, and her performances have a depth and soulfulness that is completely impossible to fake. Her beautifully-crafted, softly-spoken verse is incredibly refreshing, and the hushed stillness with which she commands the stage is as unusual as it is compelling. She's also a gracious and supportive events host who does her utmost to provide opportunities for other performers. It's this mix of raw creative talent and conscientiousness that makes Fay one of the best poets working in the East of England today."

**Leanne Moden, Fenland Poet Laureate
2013-2014; Founder and writer of
"Literary Ely"**

"Fay Roberts is a performance poet whose work gives equal and meaningful weight to both the performance and the words being performed. In other words, she gives a stonkingly good performance and her poems would not look out of place in a quality written anthology or collection. Indeed, I've seen Fay perform at both literary and performance focused events, at festivals, boisterous slams, rowdy pubs and quiet poetry readings and she always goes down well, regardless of the venue and audience.

Her poetry can be personal or political, thoughtful and humorous, but it is always lyrical and innately musical (Fay is also a dab hand at the drums, which have been known to get an airing at some of her performances).

Quietly spoken, she nevertheless has enormous stage presence and is adept at dealing with lively audiences and hecklers. At last year's open air Strawberry Festival in Cambridge, a gust of wind blew over a drum kit, which in turn knocked over the mike Fay was using. She had the quickness of mind and hand to catch the mike while continuing flawlessly with her performance and making a joke out of it all afterwards. The audience were suitably appreciative, but then they usually are: Fay is seriously worth listening to."

**J.S. Watts, Poetry Reviews Editor for
Open Wide Magazine, Poetry Editor for
Ethereal Tales, widely-published poet
and author**

"Never be fooled by Fay Roberts' seemingly gentle exterior and initial soft-spokenness. Underneath lies a dragonness of a poet, who will seduce you with her musicality, charm you with her wit, and breathe fire into the nether regions of your imagination."

**Tina Sederholm, Co-host of "Hammer &
Tongue" Oxford, Shadow Artist at the
"Shake The Dust" program 2012**

"Known to us as 'The Welsh Whisperer', Fay Roberts has the ability to bring a room to total silence, her mellifluous tones sending her audience into a dream like trance; steadfastly refusing to raise her voice as she knows that her content has the only volume necessary. She soothes and she stimulates them with her tales, leaving audiences rapt.

"She has wowed audiences at RRRANTS over the past five years now as an accomplished poet, storyteller, singer and actor, as well as being a compère, publisher and promoter in her own right. We have enjoyed her at many of our evenings, events and festivals and we cannot recommend her highly enough."

**Paul Eccentric, Co-founder and host of
"Rhythmical Ravings & Rants"
(RRRants.com) and speaking part of
"The Antipoet"**

"The spoken word/performance poetry scene has become much more crowded in recent years, which is a good thing. Performance poetry has claimed its place as a legitimate art form, and festivals like Glastonbury and StAnza provide a big and important stage for the best and, sometimes, not quite the best performers to share their work with increasingly discerning audiences.

"Fay Roberts, a seasoned performer and writer, is one of the few who never disappoints and often amazes. She not only performs her own work in the important venues around the UK – including the BBC Slam at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival – but also hosts a popular spoken word night in Cambridge and is the editor/creator of a poetry journal.

"That experience and commitment to the craft show up in her performances. Her style is comfortable and accessible, like listening to a good friend tell you a story that inevitably surprises with a twist in the end you never saw coming. She uses words with judgement and economy – a whisper instead of a shout, and always a smile. If you were in a cocktail bar ordering drinks, Fay Roberts would be a crystal flute of very fine champagne, better in the enjoyment than even anticipated.

"The stage has always rewarded insight, surprise and masterful delivery. Fay Roberts brings all of that, and she belongs on the biggest stages."

**Young Dawkins, Scottish Slam Champion
2011-2012, host/ compere of the BBC
Slam at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival**

"Fay Roberts is a force of... hmmm... what's a better word than nature? I'm not sure... but I bet Fay Roberts could tell you."

Shane Koyzcan, award-winning Canadian Poet, Author and Performer; official poet of opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

"Fay's poems do not so much follow a path as bound along it with emotional abandon making leaps of joy or understanding as the theme requires. Whether quiet and considered or fast and bright each poem resonates with energy and provides a captivating spectacle."

Emma Ormond, Runner-up, Fenland Poet Laureate 2013-2014

"I am a poet and promoter of poetry and spoken word in Cambridge. I have seen Fay quickly establish herself at the heart of the local spoken word scene. She is one of the most talented and hardworking poets I know. Her performances are polished, musical, entertaining and memorable. She is an experienced performer who can make a distinct contribution to any spoken word event."

Patrick Widdess, Established Cambridge poet and host of poetry & music radio show "Headstand"

"I especially appreciated Fay Roberts's invigorating performance poetry. She made words melt like an ice lolly, but also spike at the right time."

Afrodita Nikolova, reviewer for The Cambridge Student Newspaper (at Show And Tell (Twisted Willow Tree Company), January 2013, Cambridge)

"Fay Roberts's beautiful whispering voice dreamily takes us on journeys from classical mythology, through the mundane and on into the dark and light sides of human relationships. She holds the Cambridge chapter of Hammer & Tongue together with wit and passion. I could listen to her for hours."

Russell J Turner, Founder and host of "HeadCRASH" poetry night (Norwich), Shadow Artist at the "Shake The Dust" program 2012

"Fay has impressed me as poet and performer ever since I first saw her (about five years ago now). Her material is a cut above the usual 'she done left me'/'cock jokes' combo that is the performance norm, and are through-written, without excessive reliance on shallow punch-lines. All is expertly spoken or sometimes sung and Fay's performances are beautifully modulated, though there is intensity

too (It seems to me the Welsh bardic tradition is the ground of this at some unconscious level). She certainly has the ability to command the stage – well proven as a Hammer & Tongue MC, an environment which has also highlighted her professionalism and commitment.”

**Ian McEwen, Trustee and former Editor
of Magma Poetry, founder and host of
“Ouse Muse” poetry night**

“Fay Roberts was an unknown quantity for me – and an absolute delight. Her writing is rich, sophisticated, and multi layered, opening with a part sung chant, she zipped through hay fever, foot tapping percussion with “Swarm”, and a clever exploration of “oh” in “Oh”!

The love poem “Song from the Sea” she had introduced hoping that it would resonate with the audience, and it did, a beautiful and evocative piece, but it was the closing “Dedication”, a poetic “I Am What I Am” declaration which stood out for me. Her performance was assured and serious, but warm and engaging too. I suspect we shall be hearing more of Fay.”

**Gary Longden, Poetry Reviewer, “Behind
The Arras” (at Rhymes, May 2011,
Birmingham)**

“Fay Roberts [was] in her absolute element with a gorgeously sensuous poem to a mermaid lover, for whom she’d “turn sailor”. It had some lovely imagery, such as casting nets to “catch the moonlight” and the rhythm of the sea that throws itself again and again; this was a delight. Her later poem ‘Thanatos and Eros’ was a fabulous short lesson in the difficulties of various insults to carve into a car in runes and her last, ‘Dedication’, on struggling with queer stereotypes and finding her “own colours” was a nice way to address lesbian culture.”

**Sabotage Reviews (at Other Voices:
Alternative Spoken Word Cabaret,
August 2012, Edinburgh)**

“She has the most bewitchingly soft and tender voice. When telling poems she could tell me anything and I would believe it.”

**Matt Cooke, Founder of “Under The
Music Tree” (event reviews, Cambridge)
(at Other Voices Edinburgh Preview, July
2012, Cambridge)**

"The gentle visual metaphors of Fay Roberts showed incredible emotional intelligence whilst displaying a quiet charm."

**Hannah Rodger, Reviewer for Fringe
Report (at London Festival Fringe,
August 2010)**

"... Fay doesn't do Stand Up Poetry. Fay does Poetry that stands up! Fay's words are the good stuff; the nourishing, soul-strengthening shot that warms you on the last train back home; the line you can't get out of your mind ("a sigh, like all the world's hurt") that makes you think; that makes YOU want to write poetry.

"I must declare an interest here. I know Fay. I like Fay. I have performed and collaborated with Fay but that doesn't mean my opinion isn't true. I know it's true because I've heard other people say it after hearing three minutes of her work for the first time. The consensus seems to be "That girl's a poet!"

"I could just give you a string of adjectives that all true: lyrical, moving, bewitching, engaging but the quality I value most is the assured, quiet centre she appears to have when she performs. Softly spoken, she beguiles and draws you in, Fay makes you listen and takes you into her world.

"I have worked with Fay a lot over the past year and I can testify her work bears repeated reading and hearing. Her performances always enrich me and make me feel better..."

**Mark Niel, Milton Keynes Poet Laureate
2011-present, Producer of Tongue in
Chic and multi-award-winning fellow
performer**

"That made me cry!"

**Buxton Bookstore Owner (at On hearing
"Song to the Sea" at Buxton Fringe
Festival 2011)**

"A number of the poets really shone for me over the course of the several days. Fay Roberts being the main candidate. I positively adore her imagery and clever word use accompanied by that soft lilting voice just has me captivated and swooning."

**Jammie Sammy, Edinburgh Fringe
musician (at RRRants at the Edinburgh
Fringe, August 2011)**

"... a gentle voice in the middle of the storm, personal/autobiographical and beautiful."

**Kat Quatermass, Professional Storyteller
(at RRRants at The Camden Eye, January
2011)**

"Fay Roberts... what a brick!"

Stephen Hobbs, fellow Performer

"I worked with Fay on "Write Way Up", a spoken word showcase for The Lyric Lounge Festival in Leicester in 2009. Fay was one of seven poets selected nationwide and commissioned to write a new poem for performance, inspired by objects from Leics Museums & Archives collection. Fay worked with a composer, a video artist and myself (as Director of the showcase) to stage her performance. The show was a huge success with audience and peers alike. Fay's poetry is passionate and evocative, intelligent and witty. Her performance style is intense and powerful, but also engaging in its charm. She is a damn fine poet."

**Kevin Fegan, Poet, Playwright and
Director**

"Fay Roberts impressed us at the audition for Write Way Up with her passionately performed and emotionally moving poetry. In her actual performance piece, 'Dawning', she combined a compelling mix of emotions once more, ranging from excitement, joy, uncertainty and fear in deftly modulated piece. Fay is certainly one to watch on the performance poetry scene."

**Pam Thompson, Producer of 'Write Way
Up'**

"The improvement in both Fay's writing and performing of her poetry over the last couple of years is extremely impressive. From those early days she has developed into an intriguing and accomplished poet and a shrewd, confident live performer. I'm beginning to lose count of the times she's transfixed audiences at MK poetry nights with her deceptively soft-spoken yet powerfully compelling words. And each time I hear something new from her it feels like it's a marked improvement on what's come before, like we're watching the increasingly certain progression of a definite talent. Thoughtful, thought-provoking, poignant, poetical. Plus she sings like an angel frosted in icing sugar."

MMT, editor of Monkey Kettle Magazine

"Inaccurately described once as "a tsunami of hair" Fay Roberts is in fact more akin to a sunset over a glorious coastline; there's a profound beauty and depth in her work which brushes across the listener and sinks in to leave its mark.

"Fay's style is not the thrusting street-rapper or green porridge warrior who kicks against society's sins though her subject matter sometimes still dips into similar pools of conscience, although this is done with a deftness and subtlety that only such a craftsman of their art could bring about. There is so much more to Fay's work than that. Under her poetic guidance, for example, colours take on personalities of friendship, strength or warmth with the notable exception of Orange which seems to have wronged Ms Roberts in a way which she has not yet fully revealed (and we are afraid to ask).

"Her poetic voice is one minute free and unrhymed, the next oozing haiku and senryu of knotted zen-like ability. Clever, subtle, unafraid; her performance strides through subjects with a mastery that makes you say "yes" a little too loudly which is next tempered by an intelligence of penmanship that finds you chin-scratching as your mind unravels the interwoven words into that light-bulb moment leaving you ever so slightly jealous of her talent.

"Treat yourself: See her perform, read her words."

Ian Barker, award-winning fellow-performer

"Multi talented Fay, co-founder of Poetry Kapow, one of the leading groups promoting poetry and the spoken word in Milton Keynes, includes among her talents:

"Writing and performing poetry, organising and jointly compering the now famous Kapow nights, erecting scenery and, like many Welsh people, has a captivating singing voice. She is also DJ of no mean accomplishment.

"Fay's varied repertoire of poetry can one moment be wringing your heart strings, as she performs a piece about human relationships, the next, she takes something as mundane as a bacon sandwich and makes you taste its crisp smokiness.

"As well as being an apparently inexhaustible performer and organiser, Fay does a lot to encourage new and raw performers to get up in front of the mic and do their stuff.

"Fay carries the torch for poetry in Milton Keynes to the world (well at least to the Midlands, London, and the East of England)"

Lionel Welch, fellow performer