

JAMES VARDA: PRESS RELEASE

Small Things Records are sad to announce the death of James Varda, one of the most distinctive singer songwriters of his generation, at his home in Sheringham, Norfolk on 12 June, 2015.

James had lived and worked with a rare form of cancer for some time. He had known this day would come and until a few weeks ago was reading and listening to music, as always inspired and inspiring in equal measure. On 2014's astonishing album, *Chance And Time*, James turned his songwriting talent to chronicling the experience of confronting illness and death, and in doing so, created a unique language and music of love and pain, family, landscape and loss. It is undoubtedly his best work.

James was the rarest of musicians, always and only making records on his own terms. His 1988 debut, *Hunger*, marked him out as the original indie acoustic outsider. His gigs in those days were an electric experience and led to invitations to appear on Channel 4's *Night Network*, appearances at the Reading and Cambridge Folk Festivals, and a support slot on tour with Roy Harper.

His later work, the stripped down acoustic *In The Valley* (2004); and *The River And The Stars* (2013) showed a writer at peace with the landscape, and with an instinctive feel for nature. With his gifts as writer and guitar player to the fore, he aimed for perfection and, on *Chance And Time*(2014), he knew he had made a record which could not be bettered.

*And let my place be a sound, the colour of a church
With windows lit in deep blue light, flooding sky and earth
And let my place be a rhythm, supple and assured
On which a melody can build and rise and words can find their worth
Let my place be a chord, that echoes through the years
Let my place be an affirmation, a handshake, a 'Yes!'*

Let My Place – James Varda 2014

There will be fuller tributes in due course and, if there's any justice, his work will find long-overdue wider recognition in the weeks, months and years to come. But for the moment our thoughts are with James's wife and sons, family and friends. We will all miss him terribly.

For further information, contact: Will Harris on will.harris@pias.com

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