CV – SARAH ILLINGWORTH

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OVERVIEW

I am an experienced senior communications practitioner and writer, with a longstanding background in the Aotearoa music sector. I worked as a communications and engagement contractor in higher education in the UK from 2016–2020 after completing a Master in Poverty & Development, and spent most of my 20s in the US, working as a music and lifestyle journalist and content creator (and waitress). I make my own music as Body of Work, and support other local artists with PR and related services.

I have a sound working knowledge of a variety of digital tools, including Canva, Mailchimp, Squarespace, Wordpress, Shopify, Microsoft Office, and all major social platforms.

CURRENT

Freelance publicist (September 2020–current)

I have managed publicity campaigns for a number of emerging and established Aotearoa-based artists, including Ha the Unclear, Julien Dyne, LIPS, Anthonie Tonnon, Tom Lark and Phoebe Rings. I worked with boutique music agency Banished Music, running publicity in support of tours for the likes of BROODS, Lawrence Arabia, Garageland, and Vera Ellen, during a period where those tours were heavily impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns and alert level changes. I hold and maintain relationships with a wide network of both independent and mainstream local media.

Special projects, Michael Hurley (2019–current)

I have worked with the now late US outsider folk icon Michael Hurley since 2019, to compile his memoirs. In 2018 I booked and promoted a successful UK and Ireland headline tour for the artist, and was an Executive Producer on the 2021 album *Snockument: Songs By Michael Hurley*, a compilation of covers of Hurley's songs by artists including Cat Power, Yo La Tengo, and Calexico.

Care (October 2022–current)

I provide care to a stroke survivor on a weekly basis. The job requires me to be in the house with them between their day carer leaving and bedtime, some cleaning, and providing support in the event of an emergency.

RECENT – Aotearoa New Zealand

Communications Specialist, Recorded Music NZ (May 2023–current)

I was the senior communications lead at Recorded Music NZ, a Tāmaki Makaurau-based music licensing and distribution organisation that also produces the Aotearoa Music Awards and Official Aotearoa Music

Charts. While in post I drove an overhaul of the AMA, Charts and core brand websites and social channels, which has contributed to a significant increase in public and industry engagement with the three entities. As well as leading on the regular (and irregular) cadence of communications and publicity work in relation to AMA and the Charts, I supported the CEO and other senior staff with organisational communications, including advocacy within and on behalf of the sector. I maintain strong intergenerational relationships across the Aotearoa music industry and community, including with a broad range of artists.

Wholesale & Distribution and MerchMe Manager, Flying Out (October 2021–March 2023)
Tāmaki record store and distributor Flying Out hired me to launch and run MerchMe, a merch fulfilment service for local artists and labels that I grew to a roster of 30+ clients, including LOOP, Marlon Williams, Te Kaahu, The Beths, and Fazerdaze. This involved regular sales and Official Charts reporting, as well as grant reporting and accounting tasks. I also managed relationships and communications with artists, retail and media on the wholesale and distribution side of the business, as well as order fulfillment.

Communications & Publicity Manager, Melodics (May–September 2021)
This six-month contract saw me work in-house at this fast-growing music tech start-up, to scope and manage its communications and publicity needs. I worked across all teams as a copywriter, content creator, and to streamline communications processes and identify and coordinate publicity opportunities.

Communications Manager, Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki / Auckland Arts Festival (October 2020–April 2021)
This was primarily a publicity role and saw me lead on PR for all 70+ AAF shows. The 2021 line-up was 100% local, spanning performing and visual arts, and with a big live music component. I worked directly with artists including Che-Fu, Reb Fountain, Ria Hall, Anthonie Tonnon, the Polynesian Panthers, Anna Coddington, John Psathas, Turid Revfeim, Rina Chae, and Estère to secure significant media coverage in relation to their AAF 2021 events, along with coverage of the Festival overall. I provided communications support to our Partnerships Executive and Community and Accessibility Programme Managers, and co-managed three Marketing & Communications Assistants, one of whom was a publicist and my direct report. In partnership with the AAF Marketing & Audience Development Manager I led on the PR and messaging aspect of reprogramming the Festival due to Tāmaki Makaurau going into lockdown, working closely with the senior executive team to advise on and navigate both the internal and external communications implications of that challenge for AAF.

RECENT – UK & International

Communications Manager, Learning & Teaching Innovation, The Open University (March 2018–March 2019)
This role saw me lead on internal communications for the University's 450-person Learning & Teaching Innovation department, which oversaw the procurement, development and production, and delivery of the OU's many distance learning modules, as well as its free learning site OpenLearn. I also led on the

University's National Student Survey (NSS) campaign, and supporting work in relation to increasing student satisfaction and improving the student journey — as well as internal campaigns around corporate and commercial projects, including the OU's FutureLearn offering, its BBC partnership and the DfE-funded Bringing Learning to Life project. I co-managed a Communications Assistant.

Various (Editorial & Communications), Global Development Institute, The University of Manchester (September 2015–January 2018)
I have completed a number of short-term contracts with GDI, including a 6-month Communications role with the DFID-funded Effective States and Inclusive Development research project. I designed and produced online content (blogs, podcasts, video, infographics), created and managed media and key stakeholder lists, and managed related social channels and events. Other assignments included content creation and social management for the International Research Initiative on Brazil and Africa (IRIBA), facilitating a full transfer of the Nexus for ICTS, Climate Change and Development (NICCD) website to a Wordpress backend, and commissioning and copy editing a marketing brochure promoting the University's Global Inequalities research beacon.

Research Assistant & Communications Consultant, Sheffield Institute for International Development, The University of Sheffield (March 2016–May 2017)
I was a Research Assistant on a project titled 'Mapping the UK's Development NGO sector'. The role involved creating and populating a database of operational, including financial, information related to UK-based NGOs, and conducting data analysis. I also updated and copy-edited the project website, and shared our findings via the Institute's social channels, and directly with key stakeholders. SIID subsequently engaged me as a Communications Consultant, to develop brand identity materials and a communications strategy designed to strengthen their online presence. This involved establishing a cohesive voice for the Institute's social channels, and training their 60+ academic fellows in how to develop a social media persona and following, to build their personal professional profiles as well as increase the department's research impact more broadly.

Editor, Impolitikal (May 2014–May 2018)
I founded and launched Impolitikal in May 2014, and as Editor coordinated and directed our four-person, international editorial team; sourced and created content; oversaw brand and business development; managed relationships with our contributors and other stakeholders; organised and documented events; and managed our email list and social channels and campaigns. I worked closely with all contributors — primarily academics, journalists and policymakers — to edit their work, and assist in developing their writing style.

Editorial Board, *Don't Dream It's Over: Reimagining Journalism In Aotearoa New Zealand* (December 2015–August 2016)
This collection of essays from 30 New Zealand media practitioners and commentators looked at the challenges and possibilities shaping journalism in NZ in a digital age. I helped to conceptualise the book and its look and format; sourced contributions; close-edited and provided editorial feedback on each submission; and contributed a chapter of my own.

Content Editor, 247girl.co.nz (2008–2012)
My responsibilities included sourcing and authoring articles, interviews, polls and quizzes on topics related to health, lifestyle, and entertainment; scheduling and publishing written content and imagery; facilitating competitions; social media management.

Editor – Digital Products, Satellite Media (2004–2008)
I was a content creator and editor for Ripitup.co.nz and Back2basics.co.nz, and editor and interactive content designer for a range of commercial clients, including Vodafone NZ and AU, iTunes NZ, Sounds music stores and Coca Cola NZ (Coke.co.nz and Cokefridge.co.nz). Responsibilities included sourcing and producing articles, interviews, and interactive content; client liaison; and managing competitions. I sub-edited the print versions of *Rip it Up* and *Back2Basics* for several years, while based in New York City.

Freelance Journalist (November 2003–current)
I have contributed to a variety of print and online outlets, including: Huffington Post; *Monocle* magazine; *Zenith* magazine; *Catalogue* magazine; The Spinoff; The Wireless; *NZ Herald*; *Rip it Up* magazine; *Good* magazine (NZ); *NO* magazine; *Back2Basics* magazine; *Real Groove* magazine; *Auckland Live*; Flight Centre NZ; Localist NZ. Examples of my feature work can be found here. I have completed a number of artist profiles for Locals Only, an NZ On Air-funded feature published via the *NZ Herald*.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

As a freelancer, I have commissioned, produced and edited content and copy; built Wordpress sites; designed and implemented social media campaigns; planned and produced events; and conducted PR outreach for a range of clients. I fulfilled short-term contracts as a Promotions and Marketing Assistant for Universal Music NZ (2006), 95bFM (NZ, 2004), and Warner Music NZ (2003). I regularly engage with the music community by attending industry events and have participated in funding and judging panels.

BOOK CONTRIBUTIONS

I have contributed chapters to the following titles:

Don't Dream It's Over: Reimagining Journalism In Aotearoa New Zealand
Love Notes: For A Politics Of Love

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

MSc, Poverty & Development [Economics], the University of Manchester (2014-2015)
Postgraduate Diploma (Distinction) Development Studies, the University of Auckland (2012-2013)
Bachelor of Communication Studies [maj. Radio], Auckland University of Technology (2000-2003)

REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST