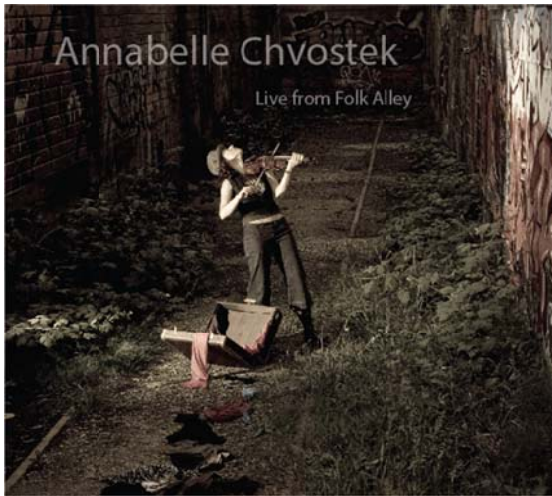


Annabelle Chvostek – LIVE AT FOLK ALLEY (Own Label, no catalogue number)



Singer-songwriter Annabelle has followed her acclaimed 2008 solo album *Resilience* with a couple of years of hectic touring and recording with The Wailin' Jennys. Several of the finest tracks on the Jennys' most recent CD *Firecracker* were Annabelle's own compositions, and one of them, *Devil's Paintbrush Road*, surfaces again here to head up this live solo set, which was opportunely recorded on the performance stage of the BluSeed Studios (a New York arts centre) in December last year.

As you can hear, Annabelle's musical presence is formidable, if at times perhaps a little too forceful, although her guitar skills, hitherto underappreciated in some quarters, are given due prominence in this full-on centre-stage recording. Annabelle also gets to demonstrate a healthy grasp of a number of different idioms during this 40-odd-minute programme.

Heartfelt covers of Peter Tosh's *Equal Rights* and Lou Reed's VU number *Some Kinda Love* sit well alongside self-penned songs *Madonna Loves Me*, *Piece Of You*, *Firewalker* and the fiddle-backed *The Sioux*, while Annabelle also takes the plunge and unashamedly introduces a rather fine, brand new (and previously unreleased) song, the mandolin-accompanied *Hartland Quay*, into the proceedings close to the end of the set.

Helpfully, the interpolated introductions and preambles have been separately banded for easy skipping, but this proves almost unnecessary as (the audience-chooses-the-set item aside) they're all mercifully brief interruptions to the musical flow. As a snapshot in time, this live album is just fine; even if ultimately it may prove another of those "for-completists-only" purchases, I think I'd rate it higher than that tag normally implies.

www.annabelle.org

David Kidman