

Buffalo Gals - WON'T GET TROUBLE IN MIND
(Get Real Records GGRCD. 013)



D'ya like old time Appalachian string-band music, played authentically and with passion and excitement? Then the Buffalo Gals are for you.

That's what I said when I reviewed their first CD (2005's *Won't You Come Out Tonight*) just a couple of years ago; its followup intentionally mirrors that disc fairly closely, certainly in musical approach and mission statement but noticeably also in terms of physical presentation (attractive design of disc and booklet, with well-informative liner notes in a consistent format). All of these factors will prove an immediate reassurance to potential purchasers who like me got cheered up enormously by the Gals' debut.

Perhaps I need to cover the background again, since the band's still not all that well known outside of the old-time circuit (more's the pity!): Buffalo Gals is a six-piece outfit that was formed back in 2002 as part of a project to bring old-time country music to the SW of England, subsequently working as both a performance and teaching band.

The sextet originally comprised three gals and three fellas, but due to a recent change of bass player the ratio is now 4:2 in favour of the ladies! All the Gals are accomplished musicians with a thorough grasp of the old-time idiom and a real deep love of American roots music: fiddler Kate Lissauer's probably the most well-known of them (check out her fine solo CD *Walk Chalk Chicken*), but banjoist Johnny Whelan, flatpick guitarist Peter Dunn, and ukulele player Sue Clare are no less talented. The lineup's completed by Sibylle Riesen (foot-percussion) and Eve Morris (bass), and together the ensemble makes a real lively sound with plenty of drive and lift, a sound that's guaranteed to set the feet dancing steps along with Sibylle and bring a feelgood smile to even the grimmest visage. And what's more, the Gals are thrice blessed indeed, for all band members (except for Eve) sing: Kate, Sue and Pete are characterful lead vocalists in their own right, while they're all capable of turning in some spirited harmony and chorus work too.

The repertoire covered by the new disc's 14 tracks again reflects that of the old-time country string-bands, with dance tunes, blues and ballads unashamedly interspersed. It covers a similar mix to its predecessor, with the Gals' thoughtfully-developed takes on familiar old-time standards (*Big Scioty*,

Crawdadd, Cindy, John Henry) rubbing shoulders with less-often-heard tunes and songs (proportionately more of these this time, including the Louvin Brothers' Great Atomic Power, the blues-jazz staple Trouble In Mind done to an East Kentucky fiddle tune and a version of the Carters' adaptation of Ma Rainey's Jealous Hearted Me). There's also a successful medley of Peg And Awl and Old Grey Mare, while this time round the Gals even manage to include a fun original penned by Sue (Daddy's Little Lulu, heavily inspired by Maybelle Carter's style).

If there's one element of the new disc that I'd judge more irresistible than the rest, then it's gotta be Kate's fabulous soaring fiddle work, a real tour-de-force of fire and attack that propels everything else along either with it or in its wake, and in whatever musical context.

I also really liked the sensibly-paced Alabama fiddle tune Farewell Trion, which I'd not come across before.

The delightful and joyful music-making on this latest CD has a real immediate impact, making it one of the most safely recommendable of recent discs in its field.

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