

Katriona Gilmore & Jamie Roberts – UP FROM THE DEEP (GR! Records)



2010 has been a real landmark year for Katriona and Jamie, with their nomination for the BBC Radio 2 Horizon Award and their first nationwide headline tour as a duo in their own right expertly fielding the ripples cast by last year's impressive debut CD *Shadows And Half Light*. Now, hot on the heels of the news that they've been invited to support Fairport Convention on their upcoming winter tour, comes the release of that all-important album number two, recently showcased at Second Friday Folk at The Venue, Stocksbridge and subsequently launched to a "captivated" crowd at a brilliant gig

in Barnsley.

We're told that in recording this new offering a conscious decision was made to strip the sound down to essentials – but although the textures are certainly clean, the distinctive combined sound this duo makes still possesses an innate richness stemming from each musician's strongly individual technique (Katriona's fiery, dynamic fiddle, viola and mandolin, Jamie's intricate, delicately percussive lap-tapping guitar).

The quality of intense assurance in their vocal and instrumental delivery and all-round musicianship is also due in part to their ability to naturally assimilate a wide array of musical inspirations, now audibly extended to more prominently embrace influences from bluegrass and traditional folk, twin poles of the musical spectrum which prove surprisingly complementary (the cryptic traditional song *Nothing At All* features a seriously beautiful guest pedal steel part, courtesy of P.J. Wright no less, and Katriona's brilliantly idiomatic (right down to the chorus rhyme!) original *Off To California* secures a coup with guest banjo from Cia Cherryholmes).

The duo's tremendous inborn assurance extends through to their songwriting, which encompasses the tough Seth-Lakeman-style folk commentary of Jamie's *All I've Known*, Katriona's eerily elusive but catchy tale of *Fleetwood Fair*, Jamie's tender narrative *The Bookseller's Story* (based on the epitaph of an 18th century Sheffield man) and Katriona's wry-but-verité account of life on the road (*No Rest For The Wicked*). And the duo's thoughtful account of the traditional *Shepherd And His Fife* is spellbinding, tellingly combined with a variant of *Shepherd's Hey*. There are further examples of creative juxtapositions of songs and tunes elsewhere on the album, as well as three vibrant instrumental sets ranging from *Punch And Chase*, which rather intriguingly seems to marry Leo Kottke with Playford, to the delicious Transatlantic-Session-style *Tennessee Green*).

Having finally emerged "up from the deep", out of the shadows of other bands, Katriona and Jamie should now be able to keep out of the half-light and move into the dazzle of full limelight.

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