

**Philip Cockerham – JANGLEBUDDY (Own Label, no catalogue number)**



Well it doesn't seem long since Philip brought out his excellent (I suppose you could call it his comeback-debut) CD *Waiting For The Age Of Reason*, but it turns out to be well over a year, during which he's been kept busy with lots of live gigs, either solo or with the brilliant double bass player Dave Bowie Jr. The latter musician therefore joins Philip on the majority of this new album's dozen tracks, providing an empathic and responsive foil to Philip's own expert fingerwork (guitars, bouzouki, mandolin) and keyboard skills.

But arguably what strikes the listener even more than the superb instrumental playing is the quality of Philip's self-penned songs (that's eight out of the twelve, plus the opening instrumental squib – although to be fair, significant parts of the remaining three are of his own devising too!). The wellspring of emotional circumstances and responses from which Philip's songs may originate is impressive, and his singing convinces on every count, whether conveying the acerbic commentary of Billy Bragg (a creative interpolation of his *Half English* with a Barleycorn bookend) or the tender, moving portrait of a couple in the grip of Alzheimer's (*Lullaby*), powerfully exploring a failing relationship (*Fighting In Whispers* – this one and the following track, *Song For Adam*, both to my mind possess the well-crafted demeanour of a classy Clive Gregson opus), having a lot of fun with not-entirely-tongue-in-cheek predictions and resolutions (*100 New Year Promises*) or raising the rafters with anthemic communal optimism (*All Pull Together* – for some time now possibly Philip's most popular gig-closer).

I also really liked *Dream On*, a delicate evocation of a child's experience of thoughts and ideas tumbling around in his head during the time between waking and sleeping. Philip's political views are tellingly expressed on the quite reasonably anti-fascist *Shine Again*, while his condemnation of war is abundantly clear in his revisit of (*The White/whatever colour Cockade*) – often referred to as *New Beret* – is a heartfelt and very pertinent contemporary response to a news item about the fate of a South Yorkshire lad in military service, while his avowedly racy interpretation of the traditional *Unquiet Grave* puts the ballad in a fresh new perspective.



Philip's solo performance is extremely persuasive, and his standing on the acoustic/folk scene is further confirmed by the willing presence of the extra guests he's been able to call upon for occasional support (singers Charlie Barker, Tom Bliss, Duncan McFarlane, Joanne Lewis and The Backyard Buskers, and pianist Tim Caesar), and by the inclusion of some characterful and exceedingly apt artwork by the young Ruth Switalski.

So go buy this fine CD, and you too can become Philip's Janglebuddy... ([www.philipcockerham.com](http://www.philipcockerham.com))