

Sabrina Piggott – SUNNY SPELLS AND SCATTERED SHOWERS (Own Label)



This is a mesmerising CD, which weaves its spell gently but insistently from a deceptively undemonstrative (I guess) start but invites instant replay by the time the closing cadences of the final track, Lullaby, are resounding in (then fading from) your mind. Cobh-born Sabrina happens to be the niece of Charlie Piggott from the Irish supergroup De Dannan, but let's get that factoid out of the way at the start, for her music doesn't really invite any kind of comparison – nor does it need to, for Sabrina's got a style all her own, genuinely unique you might well say. OK, so there's a touch of the lilting in the chorus vocal part of Caught Unaware, the second song on this, her debut CD, but otherwise her influences are unashamedly eclectic and well away from the specifically-Irish.

Her singing voice betrays the soft Cork accent, which marries a deftness of expression with a deliberate quality in the phrasing that's quite touching and certainly compulsive listening – it's so easy to be drawn in to her world. The more obviously personal songs like That Part You Took embody an aching beauty that counterpoints the minor-key progressions and leave the listener in awe of her depiction of a precarious yet determined emotional climate.

Other songs, while undoubtedly possessing a personal element, invariably look outward, propounding a real sense of open space and possibilities (Black Cloud is a particularly impressive song in this respect).

You might internally reference fringe-folk figures like Vashti Bunyan and Bridget St John (the figure of the free-spirited individual on a persuasive personal quest is clearly a role-model in a way), but vocally I also detect shades of Patsy Matheson in her crafted, tellingly phrased and slightly breathy delivery. Sabrina recorded this CD in a garden shed in Wakefield in August 2009, and it was launched some time ago now, but only on her recent appearance at Acoustic Rotherham did she come to my attention: I was totally entranced by her close and casually intense musical personality.

Here on disc, as well as accompanying herself on guitar and occasional bodhrán (the latter, interestingly, forming Sabrina's sole accompaniment for the penultimate track, Building Up), she's backed by the magnificent Leeds djembe player (and accordionist) Mark Taylor (he of the mighty Durbervilles) and cellist Zoë Carlon.

A most impressive self-financed debut album; you must hear Sabrina!

www.myspace.com/429515321

David Kidman