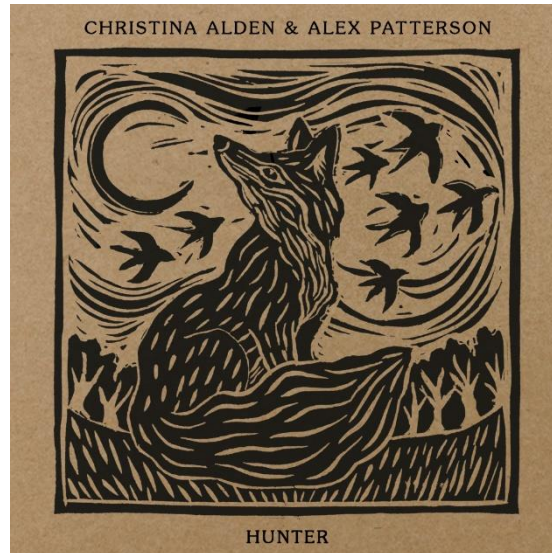


'Hunter' by Christina Alden and Alex Patterson

Reviewed by Sandra Lawes

Like all musicians, Christina and Alex were hit hard by the pandemic and the loss of their gigs and their artistic identity. But being positive and creative young people, they focused on what they had not on what they had not. Using the time on their hands and the quiet of their home city Norwich due to the lockdown, they have written, arranged and recorded this beautiful new album *'Hunter'*, which they released in May 2021.



I found this ten track CD a joy throughout – most are self-penned songs interspersed with a few delightful tunes. The songs tell memorable, evocative stories and they really make the listener think, but in a gentle calm way – they are not strident or confrontational. I loved the title track which tells of a grey wolf and a brown bear – normally solitary animals – which formed a magical bond, playing, eating and hunting together. I was also fascinated by 'My Boy', a true story of an Indonesian lamplighter who spent 49 days adrift after his boat was swept out to sea. My particular favourite, so topical in modern times, is 'Brooklyn' a song about migration, exploring the conflicting feelings of hope and anticipation of a new life, combined with the sense of loss and displacement.

Christina's pure, crystal-clear vocals are complemented by her skilled guitar and banjo playing and Alex provides elegant vocal harmonies. Their voices blend so well together that it is sometimes difficult to tell if it is one voice double tracked or a single voice.' Alex also demonstrates skilled musicianship on fiddle, cello, tenor guitar and Shruti box. Calum McKemmie plays double bass on some of the tracks. Their talent and skill combine to give a cornucopia of varied songs, each with its own charm – an album you could listen to time and time again and still hear something new in the lyrics, the arrangements or the harmonies.

The whole album has a delightfully 'rustic' feel – with the songs on the theme of the countryside, nature and adventure in the outdoors reflecting the duo's strong love of the natural world.

The 'limited edition' numbered album cases are made from recycled card, exquisitely designed by Christina and hand printed by the artists themselves. There is also a delicately printed booklet explaining the background to the songs.

Christina Alden and Alex Patterson are songwriters and multi-instrumentalists. They have been playing and singing together for the last seven years and have toured extensively in the UK and Europe – including a twenty-three date tour with Show Of Hands, a show at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for Celtic Connections and main stage performances at some of the UK's most prestigious folk festivals.

'Hunter' is their latest album and it is a testament to their energy and talent that such a quality album has come from the stresses of the last year and the pandemic.

You can find details of Christina and Alex's planned gigs, tours and albums at www.christinaaldenandalexpatterson.com and hear some of their music to 'try before you buy' this fabulous album.

I don't think you will be disappointed!

