

CD Review

'Flowers Where the Horses Sleep' by Joshua Burnell

Reviewed by Barry Guy

Joshua Burnell is a highly original songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, adept at conjuring up vast layered theatrical soundscapes as well as simpler, starker, equally captivating arrangements. Difficult to pigeonhole, the term 'folk baroque 'n' roll' is as good as any. Together with his six-piece band, he has become a festival favourite with a growing reputation as one of the most exciting and innovative acts on the scene.

Listening to his latest offering '*Flowers Where the Horses Sleep*', you would have difficulty deciding which of the tracks are traditional songs given a modern treatment and which are new. The surprise is that all 10 are Joshua originals. Recorded and mixed just before the world went into lockdown, the album has a theme - Joshua says "*The songs were all inspired by people, past and present and explore humankind's remarkable ability to find beauty, even in the hardest of times.*" The title comes from a podcast in which a Japanese-American woman, who had been interned in a US concentration camp during WW2 told how prisoners, forced to live in stables, grew flowers to bring a touch of beauty into the ugly reality of their days. Joshua only hints at the vast scope of this album by listing some of the inspirations for the various tracks which include something once said by Sir Ian McKellen for '*Labels*', an Arthurian legend for the stand-out and much heavier '*Le Fey*', a tale of transportation for the driving, percussive '*The Ballad of Mark Jeffrey*' and an encounter with a wild deer for the gentle '*Run with Me*'.

You can discover more about Joshua on his website <https://www.joshuaburnell.co.uk/> where you can also find the lyrics for the CD, listen to his music and buy the album.

