

CD REVIEW



'IF HAWKS WERE DOVES' BY RED VELVET

Reviewed by Sandra Lawes

Cambridge based folk-rock band, Red Velvet, will be releasing its latest EP 'If Hawks Were Doves' on 1 July. All written by members of the band, the six tracks are expertly performed by Deirdre Murphy (lead vocals), Les Ray (acoustic guitar/banjo/backing vocals), Colin R. Smith (drums), Gene Thunderbolt (keyboard/electric guitar) and Mike Udin (bass/backing vocals). Also making a highly accomplished contribution is Sam Inglis, with his excellent work behind the scenes as Sound Engineer and Producer, plus his impressive vocal arrangements – especially on 'Sad Songs and Wine'.

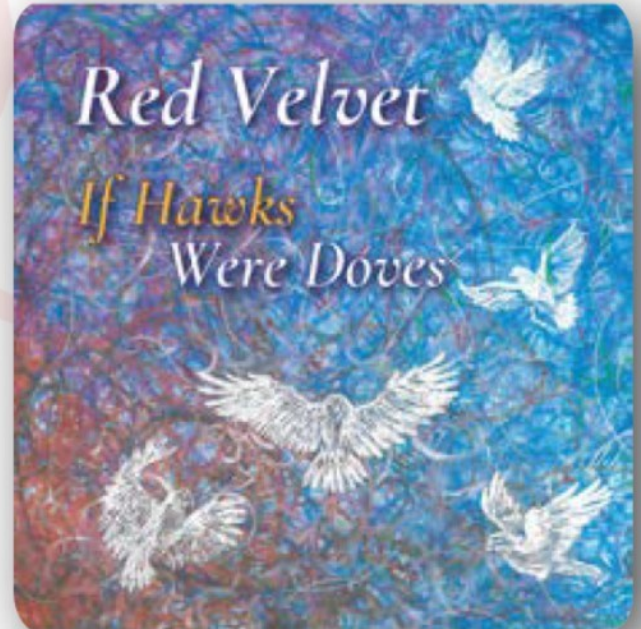
Dealing with the light and darker sides of life and the positive and negative forces that affect us all, the songs are perfectly attuned to the challenging times we are currently facing. Deirdre's rich melodic voice with its husky undertones reflects the deep emotions and feelings that inspired the lyrics. It's clear that she draws on poignant life experiences to convey the passion within the music.

Deirdre's vocals are beautifully complemented by the contributions from the other members of the band – I particularly loved Colin's rhythmic percussion, Les' banjo playing in 'Getting Too Serious', and Gene's fine guitar skills – driving the song along in 'Still Believe in Love'. His outstanding guitar solos in 'The Last Thing We Need Is Another Love Song' reminded me of the amazing riffs characteristic of some Dire Straits' performances.

Although laying bare the pain of living and loving, the skilled songwriting also offers hope and optimism – much needed in these desperate times. Despite the regrets, pain and sadness, these are not songs of despair – they are uplifting and inspiring. Uncannily appropriate to the pandemic and lockdown, the songs allude to getting away from our trouble and having a trip to the coast 'to breathe clean air and feel alive'. 'Gotta get away to see the sea again....it's getting too serious' certainly resonated with me, and the mention of spending healing time with friends is something we would all love to do right now!

I was also intrigued by the track 'Impostor', referencing a major topic of the moment – 'imposter syndrome'. So many talented, clever people suffer deeply with this affliction - apparently both Deirdre and Les among them – but you certainly wouldn't detect that when you talk with them or listen to their music. Even in this song, the struggle is resolved optimistically, and the destructive demon is beaten into submission.

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this EP – both for its musicality and for the powerful messages in the lyrics. Sadly, with all live performances on hold due to the current Government restrictions, I can't tell you about any forthcoming Red Velvet gigs.



But you can find more information about the band at www.redvelvetfolk.co.uk, @RedVelvertMM or [facebook.com/redvelvetcambridge/](https://www.facebook.com/redvelvetcambridge/)

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