

CD Review
Zoe Wren – ‘Reckless River’

Reviewed by Debbie Catt

Enchanting melodies, mesmerising rhythms and captivating vocals - just a taste of the delights presented by Zoe Wren in her long-awaited full-length debut album ‘**Reckless River**’. Written and recorded between Zoe’s hometown of London and Lugano in Switzerland where she moved recently, the songs are appropriately themed around ‘movement and journey’.



Nine of the tracks have been superbly written by Zoe and the tenth is her very personal version of the traditional ‘*Let No Man Steal Your Thyme*’. Zoe accompanies her evocative voice with her skilful guitar playing. The album also features the instrumental talents of David Delarre on mandolin, Martin Ash on viola, Jonny Wickham on double base, Lauren Deakin Davies on electric guitar and Tristano Galimberti on percussion, reinforcing the strength and quality of the overall appealing sound which is consistently maintained throughout the album.

Zoe sings with rare clarity with a gentle softness – it is delightful and distinctive. She has been compared to an early Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell which gives you an idea of the depth and quality of her performance. Her inspiring song writing draws on an early career as a busker in the London underground, with her sympathetic lyrics highlighting the realities of the harsher side of life. She gives us an emotional glimpse into homelessness, prison life and troubled relationships but manages to inject an element of hope and empathy despite the fraught circumstances.

Zoe is already a well-established and award-winning solo artist, having been invited to play shows from the Cambridge Folk Festival and open for the legendary Ralph McTell. She is also half of the Roswell duo with Jasmine Watkiss and one of the The Honeybees trio. I’ve seen her perform many times since she began her career and recently, I saw her at The Stables near Milton Keynes, where, backed by her incredible band, she co-headlined with another folk legend Mike Silver. She held the audience spellbound throughout her set as this live show amply demonstrated the depth and maturity of her skills.

Check out more details about Zoe, her latest releases and her tour dates on her website www.zoewren.com and on her [Facebook page](#). You can also find her on Spotify and YouTube. This young woman is going places fast and I strongly recommend that you see her perform live as soon and as often as you can.