

# 'Speak Of The Devil' by Dallahan

Reviewed by Carl Filby



**Dallahan** have been together for around a decade now having met on the Edinburgh session scene and they comprise of Jack Badcock on guitar and lead vocals; Ciaran Ryan on banjo and mandolin; Andrew Waite on accordion and Benedict Morris on fiddle. 'Speak Of The Devil' is their 4<sup>th</sup> album and their first with all original material and their first without any guest musicians.

The album is released on June 16<sup>th</sup> and you can catch them at the Junction in Cambridge on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023.

I have remarked before that I am not normally a huge fan of all instrumental albums (there are exceptions!) because I miss the sound of the human voice after a while, but 'Speak of the Devil' is perfectly tailored to my preferences in that respect. Of the 10 tracks on the album four have vocals, the lead vocals being provided by guitarist Jack Badcock. However, it is important to stress that doesn't detract in any shape or form from the band's ability to perform some seriously beautiful and driving instrumental pieces. I also like the combination of instruments each of which comes to the fore at different points in the album but work together extremely well.

I have to admit that my current favourite track on the album at the moment is the poignant 'Picture On The Wall' which is beautifully sung by Jack and evokes a real sense of loss. The words are taken from a poem by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century American composer and songwriter Henry Clay Work (Marching Through Georgia) mourning the loss of an infant son.

Another poet and writer, Laurie Lee, and his book 'As I walked Out One Midsummer Morning' is quoted as the inspiration for the vocal track 'Rude Spanish Soil' and the Spanish connection is also reflected in the final song 'The Bullet and The Blade', though the Spaniards receive less sympathy in this track about the destruction of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Aztec capital city Tenochtitlan.

The Spanish connection is again present in the other vocal track 'Marina' but lest you instrumental fans are wondering what all the fuss is about you can rest assured that you will be equally impressed with the non-vocal tracks starting with slow build up of the opening track 'Beaton's' which quickly establishes the instrumental virtuosity present within the band.

I could mention all the instrumental tracks as they each make their own unique contribution to what is a fine album but instead I recommend that you judge for yourself by purchasing a copy and going to see them in concert. Now then, what was that date – August 3<sup>rd</sup>?

You can purchase a copy of the album and check out gig details and more information about the band on their website <https://www.dallahanmusic.com/>.