

'Away Beyond The Fret' by Honey and the Bear

Reviewed by Carl Filby (Oct 2023)



Honey and the Bear are Lucy Hart and Jon Hart a husband-and-wife team who are based in coastal Suffolk and many of their songs reflect the landscape, people, folklore and the sea which form an integral part of their home county.

In the last year or two they have considerably raised their profile on the folk circuit and this is their third album following ***Made In The Aker*** in 2019 and ***Journey Through The Roke*** in 2021, the latter having also been reviewed on Unicorn Folk by Debbie Catt.

'Fret' is an East Anglian term for a mist or fog coming from the sea and several of these songs are about the sea and the stories that arise from human interaction with that force of nature. ***Away Beyond The Fret*** is due for release on November 3rd and launch at Snape Maltings the following day in a sold-out concert.

Both Lucy and Jon are multi-instrumentalists credited on the album with playing guitars, bouzouki and double bass to accompany mainly their own vocals. Amongst the accompanying credits on the CD sleeve you can find the names of regular band members Evan Carson (Bodhran, Drums & Percussion) and Toby Shaer (Whistles, Flute, Harmonium, Viola, Fiddle) both included in the picture above and Archie Churchill-Moss (Diatonic Button Accordion) who also occasionally joins them on stage.

The attractive artwork on the front of the CD cover is provided by Lucy and otherwise is a typical fold-over type of sleeve but with all the important information and the welcome bonus of a booklet containing all the song lyrics, which is something I always like to see.

I always get a little thrill of anticipation when I receive an album for an artist that I have heard good things of but for some reason have never quite got around to listening to. So it was with Honey and the Bear and I wasn't disappointed!

Now the difficult bit – choosing the highlights when I enjoy listening to the whole album! For the sake of the review, I particularly enjoyed the rhythms and atmosphere of ***5500 miles***, the lovely singing of Lucy on ***The Mighty Oak*** and the story of and harmonies on ***The Suffolk Hero*** but there is more than enough for all tastes, musically and storywise, on this album.

You can listen to the above tracks in '**Filby's Folk**' at 7pm on Royston Radio on Sundays 12th & 19th November then subsequently in Show 26 & 27 **podcasts** usually available from the day following broadcast.

Honey and the Bear are touring during November, including Cambridge Junction on the 15th though regrettably I have another commitment that evening. You can purchase a copy of the album and check out gig details and more information about the band on their website <https://honeyandthebear.co.uk/>.