

'Burning Bright' by Pete Cooper & Richard Boulton

Reviewed by Carl Filby (March 2024)



Pete Cooper plays the fiddle and provides vocals, and **Richard Boulton** plays guitars and cello. This is their 4th album on which they are accompanied by Raph Mizraki who provides the percussion.

Pete and Richard have been playing together for around 25 years after meeting at the London Fiddle Convention. They've appeared at Warwick, Cheltenham and Oxford folk festivals, performed and taught at Dartington International Summer School, Wigmore Hall and Wren Music, Devon and play regularly at folk clubs. On this album they explore dance tunes from English and other folk traditions, sing British and American folk songs and play their own interesting compositions.

The CD is well presented in a traditional plastic case and accompanied by an informative booklet which was inserted into the front of the case acting as the front cover and which provides credits and explains the origin of all the tunes and the songs. At the same time as I received this CD from WildGoose Records, I also received another from them which was packaged in exactly the same way with an equally informative booklet. In days gone by I might have bought a vinyl album and read with interest the lyrics and appreciated the artistry on the album cover. I still really enjoy having a lyric sheet or an explanation of the songs and stories behind them and am disappointed in the absence of one, so well done to WildGoose Records.

I enjoyed the variety of music on this album which includes a range of tunes from Strathspey to Shepton Mallet and far beyond these isles. I sometimes find that an album full of dance tunes, whether English, Scottish or Irish, can become rather monotonous after a while but not so here. Not only do we get lively interpretations of well-known tunes in the folk or popular tradition, but we also get adventures in the music of the Balkans which I have a little experience of owing to an early encounter with a Romanian Dance Troupe, but that's another story!

I also particularly enjoyed 'London' which is a poem by William Blake from his 'Songs of Experience' collection and the booklet describes how it was set to music for a 2017 fundraising gig for the Blake Society at which the funds raised contributed to the purchase of a gravestone for the poet on a previously unmarked spot in Bunhill Fields, London. Another cracker is 'Willie The Weeper' described as a 'Vaudeville Folk Song'.

A very enjoyable album and you can find more information about the duo online:

<https://www.petecooper.com/cooperandbolton.htm>