

'Cosmography' by Jack Badcock

Reviewed by Carl Filby (April 2024)



Jack Badcock is well-known as the main singer for and founding member of **Dallahan** the review of whose 2023 album **Speak Of The Devil** can be found under CD Reviews on Unicorn Folk.

Increasingly, over the last few years, Jack has started to emerge as a song-writing talent in his own right to go with his reputation for having a very fine tenor voice which is long established.

Jack released an EP, *The Driftwood Project*, in 2021 and was commissioned to write, arrange and perform a New Voices concert by Celtic Connections, but **Cosmography** will be Jack's first full album release.

The CD version of the album comes in a traditional twofold case with an accompanying booklet containing all the lyrics and an impressively long list of accompanying singers and musicians including some of the very best exponents of their art. As the press material indicates this is a very reflective album embracing Jack's interest in history, travel and the human condition. Perhaps that isn't altogether surprising for someone born in County Kilkenny; raised in Yorkshire; travelled the world with his band, and, as part of a vibrant Scottish folk scene is now based in Glasgow.

The press material also describes the opening three-part track, ***Life In Three Dimensions***, as a "tour de force" and it certainly stands out as that on the first playing of the album. In some ways this opening track dominates the album and it was a little surprising in one sense to find it as the opening track, especially as the three parts together form by far the longest track on the album. However, it does make sense in another way as the opening track as it sets the scene for the other stories told, and questions asked and considered, throughout the rest of the album.

After the first 2 or 3 plays the opening track seems less dominant as the other tracks are allowed to seep into one's consciousness, though it is still likely to remain as a favourite. My other favourites at this stage are ***Agapi Mou*** (Greek for 'my love') which is a beautiful ballad, well-suited to Jack's voice, and the same sentiments could be applied to ***The Ruin*** a reworking of an Old English elegy evoking the former glory of a ruined Roman City, probably Bath, a city for which I have great fondness having gone to University there.

Another track coming to the fore with some wonderful piano is ***Venus Was Adorned*** and even when the music itself isn't quite to my taste, as perhaps in ***The English Samurai***, the poignant lyrics are enough to sustain interest. I could go on but the best thing, if you can, is to catch Jack on his tour which starts on 1st May in Inverness but progresses South to include London before returning to Scotland on the 30th. You can find all the details of the tour and how to order the album which is released on 3rd May on Jack's website: <https://www.jackbadcock.com/> and St Neots Folk Club might be getting another visit from me soon!