

'Solstice' by The Tannahill Weavers

Reviewed by Carl Filby (November 2024)

The Tannahill Weavers formed as long ago as 1968 in Paisley and are named after Scottish poet Robert Tannahill, known as the Weaver Poet, who was a contemporary of Robert Burns.

The present line-up consists of original members Roy Gullane (guitar, vocals) and Phil Smillie (flute, tin whistles, bodhrán, vocals) plus Malcolm Bushby (fiddle) and the latest recruit Iain MacGillivray



(Highland bagpipes, fiddle, Scottish smallpipes, tin whistle). The band are augmented on this album, their 19th if I have counted correctly, by Aaron Jones (guitar, cittern, bass), Annia MacGillivray (sister of Iain, vocals) and Richard Werner (percussion).

When I first received this album, clearly aimed at the Christmas market, I listened to it with a degree of trepidation fearing that it might succumb to that sprinkling of Christmas musical tinsel that for me has sounded the death knell for many a Christmas offering. Yes, there is a degree of 'tinsel' owing to the familiarity of many of the tunes but as the sleeve notes explain the timing has been changed into jig, march, waltz and reel time to accommodate the Weavers' array of traditional instruments.

Perhaps I have been the victim of an onslaught of premature Yuletide cheer but I found the album to be an enjoyable listen. The CD comes in a traditional 2-piece card folded form with an informative 12-page booklet explaining the origins of some of the melodies and where additions had been written by various members of the band.

According to the sleeve notes the album is a first for the band being primarily an instrumental album, though I can't really comment as the band has been one that has so far gone under the radar for me as even some very well established and highly regarded bands sometimes do. In truth I would have welcomed another song or two from Annia MacGillivray, or indeed the band themselves, but the album will still make for pleasant listening during the festive season and I expect the Tannies fans will be delighted with a further addition to the catalogue after a 3-year wait since their previous offering.

For more information about the band and the album go to the band website [HERE](#) where you will also find details of the upcoming tour in early 2025 also to be found in the 'Gigs & Tours' Listing [HERE](#) on the **Unicorn Folk** website.