

'Turnstone' by the Gigspanner Big Band

Reviewed by Carl Filby (March 2025)

In case you don't already know there are two versions of Gigspanner. There is the original trio that consisted of master violinist Peter Knight, Vincent Salzfaas on percussion now replaced by Sacha Trochet, and Roger Flack on electro-acoustic guitar and vocals. They were initially known as Peter Knight's Gigspanner but are perhaps more commonly known now as the



Gigspanner Trio and are an excellent band in their own right. I know because I have seen them several times. For the purpose of this review we are concerned with the Gigspanner Big Band which are due to release their new album Turnstone on 11th April 2025.

The 'Big Band' consists of the 'Trio' plus the Edgelarks folk duo consisting of Hannah Martin, a singer-songwriter who contributes violin and banjo and handles most of the vocals and Philip Henry who contributes dobro and harmonica as well as vocals. The final member of their line-up is John Spiers an English melodeon, concertina and bandoneon player and a founder member of Bellowhead amongst his many collaborations. A bandoneon by the way is a type of concertina particularly popular in Argentina and Uruguay.

Moving on to the new album I was simply astounded by how good it was and whilst it is still early in the year I will be even more amazed if there is another album this year which makes a greater appeal to my particular musical tastes.

At one point in the press release about the album it describes **Sovay** as "the stand out second track" and whilst it is a wonderful new interpretation of a traditional folk song I do struggle to identify any of the songs as "stand out" because they are simply all so good and each one displays different aspects of the talent within the band.

I tend to find that my favourite track on an album will change over time but at present if I absolutely had to identify a 'favourite' I might go for **Silver Dagger** both for Peter Knight's sublime violin and Hannah Martin's beautiful lustrous voice and that can be applied to many of the tracks. However, whilst it is relatively easy to identify both Knight and Martin as the "stand out" players it must be remembered that music is produced by a team.

To borrow a sporting analogy the star strikers in football or rugby, for example, can only score a goal or a try if their team provide the opportunity for them to do so and, in my opinion, so it is with a good band. Clearly, the Gigspanner Big Band are a team in every

sense and that allows certain individuals to shine and the winners are the overall sound and of course, the listener.

I could say more, but to be perfectly honest there is only so much that can be said before the reader simply has to listen to the music and form their own opinion. So, my recommendation, whether you are a traditional folk fan or like a bit more variety in your folk music, or even if you are simply a fan of good music, is to get hold of this new album as soon as you can and enjoy it!

The album is around 73 minutes long so you can sit down, close your eyes and pretend you are at a Gigspanner Big Band concert. Isn't life wonderful?

For more information about Gigspanner go to the website [HERE](#) where you will also find details of the just started tour of the Trio and the Big Band which will play a few dates on and after the date of the album launch. There is also a link to be found in the 'Gigs & Tours' Listing [HERE](#) on the **Unicorn Folk** website.