

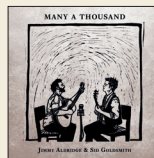


Jimmy Aldridge & Sid Goldsmith Many a Thousand

Many a Thousand Records (54 mins)

★★★★★

Socially conscious folk duo go from strength to strength



This third studio album from the Norfolk-born folk duo follows their impressive 2016 release, *Night Hours*. It contains all the same elements – a seamless mix of original and traditional songs, beautifully weighted playing and a preoccupation with profound questions of political, social and environmental concern. It's serious stuff but, like the best serious stuff, it's delivered with a delicate touch.

Many a Thousand's opener sets the tone and the tempo. 'Hope and Glory' is a deliciously melodic song that cuts to the heart of England's current problems with insidious nationalism. This duo treat such contemporary

subject matter in folk song as well as anyone this reviewer has heard. Their self-penned songs stand up to scrutiny alongside traditional numbers such as 'Poacher's Fate' and 'Working Chap'.

Once more, Aldridge's hypnotic banjo plucking brings a distinctiveness to their sound, sitting clear above languid guitar. The pair are joined by Tom Moore on violin and viola, double bassist Twm Dylan and drummer Fred Harper. Nowhere is their talent – and their confidence in using silence as well as sound – better illustrated than in their rewriting of the spiritual 'No More Auction Block' as 'Hawk's Call'.

NATHANIEL HANDY

TRACK TO TRY *Hope and Glory*

**TOP
OF THE
WORLD**
TRACK 8

seed of any revolution in fado. But it still came as a surprise: firmly based on traditional repertoire and beautifully sung, it left us wondering how far she could go from that exciting starting point. However, this sophomore effort turns her into another contender within that confusing mixture of fado and pop-leaning ballads (even if those are rooted in tradition). The problem with *EnCantado* is that the album shies away from presenting a case for Carolina's singularity, and this is especially highlighted by the tracks that do have real depth, such as the 'Traição', 'Vou Querer Saber de Mim' and 'Tenho Saudades de Mim', which poignantly show the way.

GONÇALO FROTA

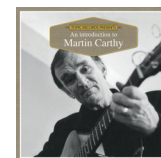
TRACK TO TRY *Traição*

Martin Carthy An Introduction to Martin Carthy

Topic Records (67 mins)

★★★★★

Essential intro to the greatest male voice of the UK folk scene



One of the jewels in Topic's vast catalogue has to be the work of Martin Carthy, one of the colossi of post-war

British folk, a man who has exerted a powerful influence on the likes of Bob Dylan, as his source for the songs 'Girl from the North Country' and 'Bob Dylan's Dream', and Paul Simon ('Scarborough Fair'). Carthy's version of 'Franklin', the inspiration for the latter, is majestic and epic, qualities it shares with 'Sailor's Life' and the superb 'Prince Heathen'. Most of the music here comes from his solo albums, and his duets with Dave Swarbrick, from his eponymous debut through to what is currently his last studio release, 2004's *Waiting for Angels*. There's nothing from his work with the Watsons, Waterson:Carthy, Albion Band or Steeleye Span, but there are a welcome two tracks from the singular 1980s band Brass Monkey, which combined trumpet and trombone with squeezeboxes, guitar and mandolin.

The material here is almost entirely traditional, researched and reassembled by Carthy himself from archives and source singers, while the covers include a rousing 'Palaces of Gold' from Leon Rosselson. One of the best of Topic's *Introduction* series, this bit of Martin Carthy should be in every folk-lover's collection.

TIM CUMMING

TRACK TO TRY *King Horn*

Maniucha Bikont & Ksawery Wojcinski Oj Borom, Borom

Wodzirej Records (46 mins)

★★★★★

Voice, bass and authentic Polish village songs



This beautifully produced set comes with a fascinating essay from singer Maniucha Bikont about the source of these songs, and the story behind her recordings with double bassist Ksawery Wojcinski, made for Polish Radio in the autumn of 2016.

The principal source of the album is the village of Kurchysya and specifically three elderly female citizens, Hanna, Halina and Lonia, who would allow Bikont to have a song

once they agreed she had mastered it. She then took the songs to Wojcinski, who developed the vocal motifs by way of improvisation. The running order illuminates the shared folk mythology between the songs: she begins with the title-track, a spring courting song, which is followed by the twisted blues motifs of 'Oj Hore, Hore', an orphan's lament, through to a wedding song potent with mythic imagery ('*Mother gave birth to a son, coiled the moon around him girdled with a star and sent him off to the world*') before breaking up into tributaries of age, death, and bitter experience. The sensitivity and power of Wojcinski's playing and Bikont's voice is of the highest order. This is a superb set of deeply mythic songs from Poland's living tradition.

TIM CUMMING

TRACK TO TRY *Oj Hore, Hore*

Carolina EnCantado

Sony Music (37 mins)

★★★★★

Strong young fado talent veers towards pop balladry



Twenty years ago, it would have been impossible to predict that there would be such a surge of young fado talent that it would be hard to keep track of every promising voice. But such a time has come, bringing fresh blood to a traditional genre that had been failing to develop its audience. The challenge now for new singers is to prove themselves worthy of this precious Portuguese tradition.

Carolina's eponymous debut album, released in 2014, didn't contain the