



# Europe REVIEWS



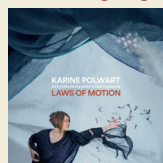
Sandy Butler

## Karine Polwart with Steven Polwart & Inge Thomson Laws of Motion

Hudson Records (49 mins)



**Scots singer gets philosophical on family, nature and Trump**



Following hot on the heels of *A Pocket of Wind Resistance*, Polwart's album to accompany her *Wind Resistance* theatre project, she has released another album that explores similar territories of movement, migration and inner meditation. She is joined by regular bandmates: her brother, guitarist Steven Polwart and multi-instrumentalist Inge Thomson.

This album feels like musical therapy. While the music is dazzlingly inventive, swooping, soaring and turning abruptly on a sixpence from discord to sweet lullaby, the poetry of the lyrics concerns fathers, sons, inherited pain, and the ephemeral nature

of human life when faced with the awesome permanence of rock, ocean and stars. Her stinging spoken-word reproach to president Donald Trump – neatly revealing his own immigrant roots – brings to mind Ani DiFranco's response to George W Bush in 'Self Evident', but with more heart for the little boy he once was. The uncompromising atmosphere is well complemented by a cover of Sydney Carter's great anti-war song, 'Crow on the Cradle'.

Elsewhere, little shimmering portraits of frail lives are revealed with Polwart's expected self-assurance – travelling easily from Japan to Italy and back to Scotland once more. And there's a sting in the tail – but I won't spoil it for you.

NATHANIEL HANDY

**TRACK TO TRY** *Crow on the Cradle*

them stand out are their vocal arrangements and harmonisations.

Traditional Hungarian song is monophonic – one vocal line. But here some very effective harmonies are added that, for the most part, suit the album's character, which relates to different aspects of a woman's life. Particularly striking is the first track 'Nyilik' (It's Opening) and the canonic singing in 'Legényvásár' (Young Men's Market). I'm less keen on the doo-wop harmony of 'Menyecske' (Bride). It's not as strong as the brilliant but one-off 2007 album *Szájról Szájra* (From Mouth to Mouth) by Szilvia Bogнар, Agnes Hercku & Ági Szalóki, but it's fresh and different. The counterpoint of the closing 'Te Vagy A Kutya' (You Are the Dog) is memorably haunting.

SIMON BROUGHTON

**TRACK TO TRY** *Te Vagy A Kutya*

## Domo Emigrantes Aquai

Domo Emigrantes (40 mins)



**A beaker of the warm south: Salento celebrated**



Translating as 'Here' in the Salento dialect of southern Italy that used to be called Calabria, *Aquai* is Domo Emigrantes' third album. A celebration of the here and now, *Aquai* pays tribute to the Mediterranean region that inspired much of it.

Having formed the group in 2009 out of a shared love of south Italian folklore, Stefano Torre, Filippo Renna, Ashti Abdo and fellow bandmembers draw from the music of their homeland. They employ traditional European folk instruments such as mandolin, accordion, Sicilian bagpipes and *friscalettu* (a nine-holed wooden flute) as well as ones from further afield including the *bouzouki* (a Turkish/Persian stringed instrument popular in Greece and often used in *rebetika*) and the Kurdish *saz* (lute). Most of the songs on this release have a plaintive, melancholy tone, exemplified by the title-track and the highly emotive 'Mi Votu'. There are some chirpier up-tempo numbers, including Gypsy-esque 'Maddalusa', which features elements of *tarantella* and *tammurriata* folk dances. For anyone with an understanding of the language and its nuances, Domo Emigrantes' *Aquai* is an album to tug at the heartstrings.

RUSSELL HIGHAM

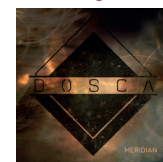
**TRACK TO TRY** *Sal'entu*

## Dosca Meridian

Dosca Records (47 mins)



**Promising debut from Glaswegian instrumentalists**



Inspired by both Scottish and Irish influences and based in Glasgow, Dosca are one of the newest bands

on the traditional scene and a fine addition they are too. *Meridian* is their debut album, and it highlights their musicianship while showcasing their inventiveness and enthusiasm. Comprising fiddle, bagpipes, flute, guitar and occasional synth, there is certainly a Peatbog Faeries or Treacherous Orchestra vibe to the proceedings, which is certainly no bad thing. However, at times it feels as though the band aren't quite sure of their own identity just yet.

Title-track 'Meridian' is a 36-second cacophony, which opens into 'Accidental Thumb', a slow and rather ponderous tune. 'Pound a Week Rise' is more effective, with some powerful vocals from Joe Armstrong – a genuine highlight on the album whose atmosphere is echoed in the band's cover of 'Arthur McBride'. Tunes 'Storm', 'Oblique' and 'Golden Brown' bring a much-needed intensity and sheer vibrancy to the album, highlighting the power the band promises and can deliver.

There are some genuinely beautiful and impressive moments on this occasionally chaotic album. With so much to savour on *Meridian*, there is plenty of promise of things to come from the Dosca boys.

BILLY ROUGH

**TRACK TO TRY** *Meridian*

## Fara Times from Times Fall

FARA Records (47 mins)



**Rugged island music, with a strong sense of Orkney history**



This Orkney born and bred quartet – fiddlers Kristan Harvey, Jeana Leslie and Catriona Price, alongside pianist

Jennifer Austin – have been steadily impressing audiences since their 2016 debut *Cross the Line*. Here, they build on their inspiring debut with an accomplished series of traditional tunes and new compositions inspired by their home island. ▶