

firmly on the lyrics, message, and upbeat energy of her guitar.

The anthemic refrain appears frequently throughout, and with a lengthy tour across the latter quarter of 2021, fans will be getting the lyrics down and strengthening their arm muscles to hold aloft their lighters in homage. But Petrie is always one step ahead and understands how this power and potential can be wielded by the inauthentic. In 'Galway', she tells us, unaccompanied, that she can't compete with homegrown talent, that 'she's the worst thing on tonight/and it's 10 euros in.' It is this self-awareness, this unabashed truth-telling, even when she herself is on the receiving end of the criticism, that has sealed her reputation as an excellent

musician and why – thankfully – she'll 'never be Ed Sheeran.'

SOPHIE PARKES
TRACK TO TRY *Galway*

Mary Ann Tedstone Glover
The Music of Ancient Rome

Integrity Publishing Ltd (25 mins)

★★★★★
Do as the Romans do



A glance at the cover and a read through the story behind this release, with its tales of research into ancient notation, and you could be forgiven for thinking this may be an overly-academic exercise; which it is,

but it's also very enjoyable. The aim of the album is for it to be the first accurate collection of ancient Roman music, with Tedstone Glover leaving no stone uncovered in finding out how this music would have been played 2,000 years ago.

Instrumentally, she sticks to instruments that would have been used in ancient Roman street music, namely the *tibia* (a reed instrument), the *pandoura* (precursor to the banjo), and variants of the lyre, as well as percussion such as the rattling cup. Recorded live as a group, there is real energy in the pounding groove of 'Bacchus' with its echoes of Celtic or Galician music largely thanks to the tibia, its raspy tone the same as a fiddle. There's real intrigue to the melody of

'Saturnian', which could easily have been a Shirley Collins discovery. The big surprise is that, even when there are Latin vocals courtesy of Papagena, this music does not feel disconnected to folk music that is still being played.

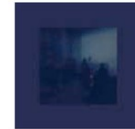
RUSS SLATER
TRACK TO TRY *Saturnian*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

In the Echo: Field Recordings from Earlsfort Terrace

Ergodos (34 mins)

★★★★★
An exquisitely curated concept compilation



Proof that Irish traditional music is the most amenable of genres, *In the Echo* brings together leading figures in the form with musicians from other fields to produce one of 2021's most seductive albums. Released digitally and on vinyl, producer-curator Ross Turner's eight-track 'concept compilation' is as satisfying as it is intelligent, filtering traditional idioms through lo-fi immediacy with the emphasis on the subdued and the introspective, the whole suspended in a soft, hallucinogen-tinged glow. Recorded in the 'remote pockets and open spaces' of Dublin's venerable National Concert Hall, it's as much an exercise in evoking sonic atmospheres as in describing pensive emotional moods.

Complexity artfully disguised as simplicity, the result startles with its overcast but transforming beauty. Moving from Lisa O'Neill and Colm Mac Con Iomaire's heart-rending 'Peggy Gordon', with plaintive vocals backed by fragile banjo and aching strings, to 'MCMXIV', an otherworldly blend of Lisa Hannigan's crystalline voice and the intricately taut and tender textures of the Crash Ensemble, it casts the most appealing of spells. Saileóg Ní Cheannabháin and Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh's 'The Campanile' is all hesitancy and hushed delicacy, Paul Noonan and Roger Moffatt's 'A Tenderness' a scorching, dyspeptic tale of betrayal, Brigid Mae Power and Adrian Crowley's 'Halfway to Andalusia' is a regretful apologia laced with languid forgiveness. Quietly stunning.

MICHAEL QUINN
TRACK TO TRY *Peggy Gordon* by Lisa O'Neill & Colm Mac Con Iomaire



Karine Polwart & Dave Milligan
Still as Your Sleeping

Hudson Records (42 mins)

★★★★★
The case for folk music as a living tradition



There's a paradox at the heart of this album from Scottish singer-songwriter Karine Polwart and pianist Dave Milligan. It is that a project conceived during lockdown by two musicians from the same Scottish village, and which is so redolent of place but yet also cut through with a sense of travel and movement – both through land and seascape and through life. Polwart is a master at the art of excavating detail and tapping into our need for belonging. Her work has often focused on her homeland – not simply Scotland, but the village of Pathhead and its moorlands. There's the sense that she's burrowing down, like the protagonist in Geoffrey

Household's *Rogue Male*, into the very soil of Midlothian. Yet she is also burrowing into life, and its passing. Here there are traditional songs of parting ('Craigie Hill', 'The Parting Glass' and Burns' 'Ae Fond Kiss'), and self-penned reflections on mortality ('Heaven's Hound', 'The Path That Winds Before Us' and the mesmeric 'Siccar Point').

Polwart is quietly building a body of work that makes the most compelling case for folk music as a vital, living tradition. Her songs offer a profound solace usually only found in the traditional songbook. This is another majestic work, deceptive in its simplicity, poignant in its accomplished, stripped down musicianship.

NATHANIEL HANDY
TRACK TO TRY *Craigie Hill*

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