

Ron Jappy

Vincular

Bow Fiddle Records (BWFDR001)

We often receive emails asking if we'd like to review such-and-such a CD and it seems churlish to refuse, even though it's impossible to promise that anything will actually make it to print. Sometimes what we receive turns out to be a surprise and a delight and so it is with *Vincular*.

Ron Jappy is a multi-instrumentalist from the North-East of Scotland. Initially a fiddler he first joined the Strathspey Fiddlers, formed his first ceilidh band, Cruachan, before moving to Glasgow, travelling the world and playing for nobles and knights. And then he got the taste for arranging and accompaniment and is now as much in demand as an accompanying guitarist as a fiddler.

Vincular isn't really a solo album although his name appears on the cover. True he plays on all the tracks and wrote most of the music, but the records is made from the viewpoint of an accompanist. Ron plays mostly guitar, organ and Rhodes and his fiddle appears on only two tracks. Lissa Robertson takes the violin credit and Mhairi Mackinnon plays fiddle on four tracks. Innes Watson plays viola, Alice Allen plays cello and James Lindsay contributes double bass so we have a reasonably traditional line-up. But... there is Mark Scobbie from Mànran on drums, funk bassist Simon Phillips and guitarist Euan Malloch and, hey we have a rock band, too. And don't forget vocalist Ainsley Hamill.

The first track 'Trouble', enjoys a wild start and settles down in to a solid Celtic-rock groove with lead instruments whirling around. Next is the relatively conventional 'From The East', which includes a Skinner tune and is decorated by Joy Dunlop's stepdancing. The first song is the beautiful 'Mairead Nan Cuiread', initially sung over a delicate backing which quickly builds in intensity and the excitement of its conclusion is followed by the soothing piano led 'A Day To Remember' with Scott Wood's whistle topping the melody. 'Northburn Creek' featuring electric guitar, has the hint of a country edge but there is so much going on here.

After the graceful 'Shalom' and a brief acoustic guitar 'Interlude' the big band is back with the final set of tunes, 'Tactical Penguin', which gives Euan Malloch his head and a closing song 'A Place To Call Home', co-written by Jappy and Hamill.

I may be getting old but I swear that I hear this album differently every time I play it and this quite something.

Dai Jeffries - Folking.com

