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40th MILWAUKEE IRISH FESTIVAL 2021 WISCONSIN, USA, AUGUST 20-22

Featuring: O'Connell the Ladies, Emma Ryan, Scouting Orythem, Gaelic Storm, Spillane, Barry Mullins, The Byrne Brothers, Synanon, KATHA, John O'Leary & Eileen Conway, Aulavy, Dáire Eard and Frank's Party



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roots and established a seven-piece backing group called The Rising Sons. It's an interesting line-up which includes electric guitar and bass guitar, as well as more traditional instruments such as fiddle, banjo and whistles as well as the ubiquitous bodhrán. In the centre of it all is George himself on vocals and guitar, a compelling figure with a big voice and an ability to interpret a range of material, ranging from traditional ballad fare to more contemporary songs. Recorded live in Ballymun in front of an enthusiastic audience, the opener *Hot Asphalt* sets the mood, George's acapella introduction prefacing a spirited rendition of the Luke Kelly classic, followed by the more relaxed *Lifeboat Mona* from the same source. But his repertoire

BRAD REID

NEW Scotland

Own Label, 15 Tracks, 55 Minutes www.bradreid.ca

Nova Scotia based multi-instrumentalist and in particular on this album a fiddle and bass player, Brad Reid celebrates ancestral Scottish music in *New Scotland*, an album of tunes, songs and lilted, his sound primarily rooted in the Scottish tradition with lots of other influences allowed in.

Reid's unique, modern day interpretation of music that originated with Scottish highland clearances, other migratory patterns and waves of Scottish

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settlements in Canada is a happy bounce, enabled by strong musicianship and arrangements. There's a rich panoply of rhythmic dance tunes, timely playing, excellent in pitch and phrasing. From a geographically close, culturally similar region, *Northumberland Shores* is a delightful tune, hints of nostalgia in the soft melody. *Hills of Glenorchy* is a rouser, with Brad foremost on fiddle, Dave Mac Isaac's guitar superbly rhythmic, a compelling dance tune, the *Braes of Dunvegan* also a lively evocation to dance and *Glasgow Gate* traditional yet innovative.

This culturally significant recording which connects the tangled paths of his emigrant ancestors to his own passion for their music is a fine harmonic soundscape, great variety and a few surprises, like the rare treat in a contemporary CD, a lilted track. Reid lilted two reels, the very popular Irish tune *Lucy Campbell's* followed by *Sandy Cameron's*. With very effective foot-tapping percussion, his vocal ornamentation is excellent, his range well suited. This is a unique album, traditional Scottish with a good dollop of jazz, classical, modern music and a stellar line up of accompanists; solid guitar and double bass backing by Mac Isaac and Jamie Gatti, adding great depth, as does the steady pulse of Tom Roach's congas.

Seamus Heaney said 'the love of place and lamentation against exile from a cherished territory is a typical strain in the Celtic sensibility', applicable to the impetus behind and journey motifs Brad Reid chose for this fine album.

Anne Marie Kennedy

ELEANOR SHANLEY & JOHN FEELEY

randomly, ensuring that there will be life-giving oaks in the world. *Zunshine in Winter*, a dialect poem set to music, speaks of hope of a coming spring. *Hey John Barleycorn* is the eternal story of the triumph of the little everyman against the odds of time, told in simple tale of ale, where the rise of the smallest grain becomes a lifesaver, which it certainly was before water was fit to drink. Their native Dorset is a place of ports and of embarkation, the longing for the dream beyond the limpid horizon, haunting those who tread the paths above the chalky cliffs of Purbeck Limestone. Aptly Ninebarrow include two sea songs here, an a-capella *Sailor's Farewell Shanty* and an accompanied *Sailor's All*, which says we are all sailors until we find our own safe harbour.

For Ninebarrow's new folk songs tell it like it is, their mastery of metaphor and music, their awareness of their own places and their impact not only on the souls of their fans but on the planet itself makes this music that is very 2021.

Seán Laffey

ANDREW FINN MAGILL AND SEÁN GRAY

Half Light

Own Label, 19 Tracks, 19 Minutes, 15 seconds

<http://www.seangraymusic.com>

<https://andrewfinnmagill.com>

For those of you who are followers of Andrew Finn Magill's prolific projects, you're in for a refreshing surprise when you hear his latest release. *Half Light EP* (July 2020). Magill (All-Ireland Fiddle finalist) is known