

The Woodbine & Ivy Band

Traditional songs recast as country-tinged folk rock with an impressive cast of guest vocalists.

The Woodbine & Ivy Band is a group of Manchester musicians who came together to arrange and perform the ten traditional songs that make up this album. For each song they invited a different singer to contribute a lead vocal. These guests include Jackie Oates, Fay Hield, Nancy Wallace, Olivia Chaney, Pinkie Maclure and Jim Causley.

The band channels the hazy spirit of classic country rock in their exploration of the English and Scottish song tradition. Featuring layered guitars and a fluid yet muscular rhythm section, these songs are awash with warm pedal steel guitar and laced with harp, trumpet, Hammond organ and synthesiser, creating an expansive sound that reaches beyond that usually associated with traditional song. There is a sly tipping of the cap towards the electric folk revival of the 1970s, although the musicians involved are not all from a folk background: instead they bring a diversity of influences to bear on their interpretations of the songs.

The Woodbine & Ivy Band are drawn to autumnal songs with a vein of melancholia or a sprinkling of the supernatural at their core: from the sinister innocence at the heart of *Gently Johnny* to *Twa Corbies'* macabre spectacle of two crows discussing their prospective human feast to the haunting tale of the discovery and fate of the *Poor Murdered Woman*, the band delve into the darker realms of the human imagination. Not all the tracks are so strange and arcane: *Spencer the Rover* is an everyday redemption song, whilst *the Roaming Journeyman* is a celebration of cheerily drunken exuberance.

The singers were initially invited to perform the songs a cappella and, during a series of intense late night sessions, the band used these performances as a guide to the choice of instrumentation and the mood of the arrangements. The fruits of these free-ranging sessions were consolidated during recording dates in North Manchester's Limefield Studio, where the legendary folk producer, Bill Leader, was around to lend a hand and give the band his quiet nod of approval.

The musicians and singers were gathered together under the direction of Peter Philipson and Michael Doward and include some of Manchester's finest players in John Ellis, Rachael Gladwin, Luke Das-Gupta and Alan Cook. The final recording session brought together a 12 piece vocal chorus to add rousing singaround backing vocals as a concluding flourish.

Amongst their influences, the Woodbine & Ivy Band cite the music of Sandy Denny, John Martyn, The Byrds, Pentangle, Crazy Horse and the drone rock of Spaceman 3. This album is also one for fans of Joe Boyd's Witchseason Productions and much of the music released on the Harvest, Leader and Transatlantic record labels

Key tracks: Spencer the Rover, Gently Johnny, The Roaming Journeyman

For further information, pack shots or band interviews, please contact Nigel Spencer at Folk Police Recordings on 07879 777099 or 0161 881 5156 or email info@folkpolice recordings.com

Folk Police Recordings
Manchester, England



Tracklisting

- Spencer the Rover**
(sung by Fay Hield)
- Alison Gross**
(sung by Rapunzel & Sedayne)
- Twa Corbies**
(sung by Pinkie Maclure)
- Gently Johnny**
(sung by Jenny McCormick)
- Poor Murdered Woman**
(sung by Olivia Chaney)
- Under the Leaves**
(sung by Elle Osborne)
- Out With My Gun in the Morning**
(sung by Jim Causley)
- Derry Gaol**
(sung by Jackie Oates)
- The Green Wedding**
(sung by Nancy Wallace)
- The Roaming Journeyman**
(sung by James Raynard)

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