

Flit is work of incandescent beauty and timely relevance. There is power and urgency in the songwriting, the soundscape and the delivery that echoes the desperation of all migration crises. *Laws Of Motion* (Polwart) – “the promise of another chance is stronger than the ocean” – is delivered as a powerhouse anthem by Holmes. And an anthem it should be!

Be sure to catch the full immersive, transporting *Flit* experience (with visuals too) live this month.

martingreenmusic.co.uk

Sarah Coxson

CONSTANTINOPLE & ABLAYE CISSOKO

Jardins Migrateurs Macase MACASE 016



In the last quarter of a century there have been quite a number of cross-cultural experiments where Manding jalis have blended their kora playing with music from other traditions. The ones that have made the biggest impact have been the two

Songhai albums and the Afro-Cubism project. The two versions of Afro Celts, both with Kouyatés on kora, have given us modern takes on fusion. If there is any justice then this album will gain wide recognition because it shows the blending of musical cultures at its most successful.

Ablaye, from Saint-Louis in Senegal, has already been involved in a wide range of collaborations with contemporary jazzmen such as Simon Goubert through to the blues of Eric Bibb, and works now with a trio long established in Montreal whose eclectic tastes take them through baroque music to that of the cultural legacy of the band's Iranian brothers Kiya and Ziya Tabassian.

The music is dense and absorbing, particularly in the meticulous interplay between kora and setar and between kora and viola da gamba. This is no mish-mash jam that can often typify such collaborations. Each musician has clearly had to engage with the others' musical heritage and find a place to express their own musical language and the result makes very satisfying listening. This can be heard most clearly on the pieces that are based on the tradition; the way that Ablaye reworks the popular kora piece *Kedo* is probably the best example of this and the kora has to make the reverse journey when it is heard in *Traversées*.

The music from this very enjoyable album has been widely heard in concert in Canada but it deserves a much wider listening.

ablaye-cissoko.com/jardinsmigrateurs

Vic Smith

SETH LAKEMAN

Ballads Of The Broken Few Cooking Vinyl COOKCD644

Liberated from all that 'poster boy of folk' nonsense, Seth spreads his wings. He still overdoes some of the quivering vibrato vocals that characterised his more frenetic thrashes of old, but this is a much calmer and more studied affair in which raging seas, heroes, whether rampaging or tragic, are largely – though not entirely – jettisoned.

It is less fiddle-driven that we have come to expect; at least that stomping fiddle that characterised his pop star year. At times he adopts almost classical techniques while his ghostly electric guitar is a fascinating feature of the title track and there's some gorgeous rhythmic acoustic guitar on *Meet Me In The*



Constantinople & Ablaye Cissoko

Photo: Michael Stobodian

Twilight. In terms of material he has veered slightly away somewhat from the epic West Country legends that have previously occupied him so much and – if we can draw any sweeping conclusions from the sentimental but rather lovely *Whenever I'm Home* – has started to look more inwardly for his songwriting inspiration.

Presumably much of the credit for the surprising variety of shades and styles here (including an effective, gospel treatment of Levon Helm's *Anna Lee*) goes to the influence of producer Ethan Johns (who has, after all, previously worked with the likes of Kings Of Leon, Paul McCartney and Tom Jones). Recorded live in a Jacobean Manor House, he's also incorporated Devon trio Wildwood Kin to offer another fresh dimension with their close harmonies and sweet backing vocals, although this doesn't always hit the mark and their lightness works against the otherwise gritty *Innocent Child*.

Maybe another factor in the shift of direction is his re-acquaintance with traditional song gleaned from his involvement with *The Full English* show. This he revisits with commendable relish, turning *Willow Tree* into a country howl aboard wailing fiddle while the rousing lyrics (“Do your best for one another / Making life a pleasant dream / Help a worn and weary brother / Pulling hard against the stream”) of the grand old-time favourite *Pulling Against The Stream* is delivered with anthemic intensity.

All of which contributes to a friendly, accessible album of welcome surprises.

www.sethlakeman.co.uk

Colin Irwin

PARIDE PEDDIO & JONATHAN DELLA MARIANNA

Brinca Brincanus/Felmay PC01/16



Are there any albums by artists from Sardinia that are less than exciting and entrancing or is it just that none have come this way? From the sonorous male voices of the tenore through to their dance music, it all seems to make compelling

listening. This album brings together two instruments that are vital to Sardinian dance music – the diatonic accordion, played by Paride with Jonathan contributing on flute and mainly the launeddas, a mouth-blown

triple pipe, two of them fingered and one acting as a drone.

Their playing together brings the best of the old and the new. The duo are young and have just started to make a major impact on their island's music scene and they bring all the vitality and adventurousness that you would expect from instrumentalists in their position and yet it is clear that they are steeped in the love of their tradition and do not find it necessary to introduce any outside influences into their approach. In particular, Paride shows a dazzling technical wizardry in his playing without ever crossing that fine line to where his playing could be regarded as flashy.

Sardinia has a 'singing for dancing' tradition called 'ballo cantata' and this is featured here with fine contributions from Carlo Crisponi and Federico Di Chiara with the latter also contributing some very danceable harmonica playing.

Then just when we think things can't get any better there is a cameo appearance by the best known star of Sardinian traditional music, Elena Ledda. That they had the cheek to ask her and that she accepted and gave such a committed performance says a great deal about this young duo.

www.felmay.it

Vic Smith

KHMER ROUGE SURVIVORS

They Will Kill You, If You Cry Glitterbeat GBCD 036



If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, how does this apply to music? Are we too obsessed with our own pentatonic prejudices, or perhaps it's more a matter of whether we're looking for differences or connections?

Questions are likely to crop up with producer Ian Brennan's (Tinariwen, Hanoi Masters) return to South East Asia and this intriguing roundup of Cambodian music by artists that fell foul of, but crucially survived, the Pol Pot regime.

The tone-language may sound unfamiliar to Western ears, but the tracks show plenty of parallel themes and sounds that we can all identify with. Often from unexpected forms. The Cambodians, not surprisingly, call this 'country music'. But take away the scratchy accompaniment on Thuch Savanj's