

WÖR

Sssht Appel Rekords APR1374

Compared with other European countries of its size, and there are quite a number of them with a population of nine to twelve million, Belgium seems to punch well above its weight when it comes to the number and quality of its folk and roots music releases, and here is another one to catch the ear.

Wör are an instrumental band and they make a powerful muscular sound when going full pelt at dance tunes but they vary things with some slower more subtle airs. Everything is tightly arranged with frequent changes of lead instrument and in the overall timbre and dynamic of the band sound.

Their previous (2015) album drew praise in these pages and its title *Back To The 1780s* gives a clue to their repertoire; it was all drawn from 18th Century Flemish music manuscripts and the same is true this time, but as has already been suggested, the approach is anything but antiquarian. Yes, you would expect accordeon, pipes, fiddle and guitar in a European folk band, but the ubiquitous presence of the baritone sax is just one indicator that they take a thoroughly modern approach.

There is everything to suggest that they must be a superb live act with festivals throughout Europe and Canada, and their British dates – Shetland to Sark – suggest that they have these islands covered pretty fully.

Interestingly enough, many of these tunes from archives in Flanders are going to sound familiar to the ears of English musicians. Tunes that we know as *Buttered Peas*, *The Sussex Cotillion*, morris tunes... there's even a sort of theme and variations on *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. Flemish indeed! I hope our Brexit negotiators are reading this. That big red campaign bus ought to have had "Taking Back Control Of Our Tunes" painted on the side!

www.denappel.be

Vic Smith