

complex, syncopated set of *Romanian Tunes*, and also in the sonorous double-bass and Balkan fiddle of *Megrakjåk A Tuzet*.

Further treasures on this album are the fabulous vocal tracks. Jack Badcock is a superlatively-gifted ballad-singer. *Chosen And True* is a traditional Transylvanian ballad, sung in English to a hauntingly lovely melody. *Carrick-A-Rede* is sung with a fine, tender, expressive vocal. There's a beautifully atmospheric arrangement, with string-quartet-style accompaniment, of the American ballad *Katy Dear*. The mellow, warm tone and clear, bright delivery of Badcock's vocal is reminiscent of 1960s folk-revival singers.

And the Irish instrumental sets are breathtaking. Stomping jigs and multicultural, genre-crossing melodies are played with extrovert panache and swagger. The fast and furious *Spicy Shoes* set has a loping, funky rhythm with bluesy double-bass, jazzy fiddle, and an exhilarating duet between uilleann pipes and banjo. *Tartare Frigate* is a fiery, tight instrumental set, with complex, syncopated rhythms and razor-sharp banjo.

The album closes with the delightful *Shame And Scandal In The Family*, a laugh-out-loud bawdy song. God bless you, boys, I was beginning to fear that comic songs had departed the Scottish folk scene.

[www.dallahanmusic.com](http://www.dallahanmusic.com)

Paul Matheson

## HANNAH SANDERS

**Charms Against Sorrow** Sungrazing Records SGR001

Hannah grew up travelling and touring extensively with The Dunns, the family group of her parents (both singers of traditional music). Then came a spell in the States pursuing a career as a cultural anthropologist, and in 2013 she returned to the UK and reconnected with the tradition to which she's always felt such a close bond. Since then, she's released three strikingly assured EPs, one in tandem with Liz Simmons, the others solo efforts, the latter of the two (*Fate*) a kind of taster for this debut full-length.

*Charms Against Sorrow* first reproduces *Fate's* opening track, a limpid and engaging account of *I'll Weave My Love A Garland*, which, in addition to Hannah's own singing and meticulous guitar accompaniment, boasts some magnificently judged and highly atmospheric dobro playing from The Willows' Ben Savage (who's also done a marvellous produc-

Hannah Sanders



tion job on the disc). Hannah responds keenly to the intimacy of this song, and this, together with a wonderful clarity of diction and expressive nuance, are also hallmarks of her a cappella rendition of *A Sailor's Life* and her melodious, flowing take on *Bonnie Bunch Of Roses*. Here one can discern an almost uncanny resemblance to Sandy Denny in her powerful and creative handling of both narrative and lines, while at other times (the enthralling close-up storytelling of *Lord Franklin* and the more animated groove of *Prickly Bush* variant *Joshua*) there are hints of early Joni Mitchell. Hannah can also easily make the switch from tenderly pained outpouring (Anne Briggs' *Go Your Way*) to poised cool-jazz mode for the spine-chilling (and brilliantly controlled) howls of Michael Hurley's intriguing opus *The Werewolf*. On either contemporary or traditional songs, Hannah's refreshingly unafraid to take risks in arrangement or interpretation, for she takes the entirely sensible view that "the songs are big enough, and old enough, to have anything thrown at them", thereby delivering an intensely personal interpretation at all times.

Although Hannah's vocal and interpretive skills are rightly the focus here, talented friends (bassist Jon Thorne, cellist Anna Scott and Ben's fellow-Willows Evan Carson and Jade Rhiannon), also make a telling contribution to the album's special aura. Even so, Hannah proves a force to be reckoned with on her own terms.

[www.hannahsandersfolk.com](http://www.hannahsandersfolk.com)

David Kidman

## CAJUN ROOSTERS

**Hell Yeah!** Whoopee Records WR 61527

Well, blow me if it isn't 24 years since I interviewed Chris Hall for an article on the seemingly unstoppable Brit-Cajun scene. The gumbo's gone off the boil a bit now, and many of that era's best practitioners have departed to scrape and squeeze elsewhere, but 2014 finds Chris still pumping his ten-button accordion, and in some excellent musical company. The Cajun Roosters have been around for a few years now, and *Hell Yeah!* (having arrived late at the review desk) has already picked up a gong at the 'Cajun Grammys' in Lafayette. This is a fine band.

With a Nigel Farage nightmare line-up spanning five European countries, the Roosters combine a potent punch with the authenticity that comes from neck-high immersion in regional culture and the legacy of the old

masters. Everyone from Sir Paul Macca downwards knows that Hall is a master of the piledriving yet subtly decorated Cajun accordeon style, but the real revelation is the fiddle playing of David Buyle. The Doucets and Greelys of this world know how to combine traditional style with risk-taking, and Buyle is up there with the best of 'em. His string-driven melody *Donnez-Moi* is modal, dark and quite irresistible.

Like all top Cajun bands, the Roosters are no strangers to the archives, giving a good drubbing to Sidney Brown's *Chère Bébé* and Nathan Abshire's *French Blues*, and referencing Iry Lejeune and the Balfas. Hazel Scott provides excellent vocals, from a convincing Louisiana holler to a slinkier approach on the Latin-flavoured *I Wanna Do Bad Things To You*, while a Franco-German rhythm section puts plenty of poke into the back line. Top quality stuff – they play mostly on the Continent, but do get over here.

[www.cajunroosters.de](http://www.cajunroosters.de)

Brian Peters

## RICARDO RIBEIRO

**Largo Da Memória** Parlophone 2564639430

Lisbon native Ricardo Ribeiro favours a traditional fado sound, at home with classic artists and the texts of poets such as Alfredo Marceneiro, Fernando Farinha, Mascarenhas de Barreto, Afonso Lopes Vieira, David Mourão Ferreira, Manuel Alegre, and Pedro Homem de Melo. Possessed of a puissant operatic tenor, commanding physical presence, and volatile vocal attack characteristic of the genre, Ribeiro acknowledges fado's Moorish strains, teaming with Lebanese oudist Rabih Abou-Khalil on *Fado Do Alentejo*. The music's Arabic influences also are manifest in the flamenco intimations of *Tarab*, wherein Ribeiro is backed by one of Portugal's finest guitarists, Pedro Jóia, as he is on de Melo's *Entrega*. Ribeiro, also a guitarist, includes a modal instrumental of his own composition, *Quando Nasceste*, which similarly nods to the cultural coalescence of nearly eight centuries of Arabic dominion over the Iberian Peninsula. Lyrics transcribed in Portuguese.

[www.ricardoribeiro.org](http://www.ricardoribeiro.org)

Michael Stone

## REBEC

**Ayres That Meads And Pastures Fill** Epona EPO006

Hey the nonny nonny no! Some 24 years since they packed it in, Rebec, named after the antique version of the violin and once on the verge of inking a record deal with Plant Life, are an unexpected, though welcome presence in my CD review stack. Untangling the puzzle, it appears main players Bob Cross and Mike Billington though living half a world apart, the former in New Zealand, the latter in Manchester, felt after a career of two decades and a similar period of inactivity, it was about time Rebec issued an album, a memorabilia-packed web presence having kept the name and memory.

Concept-wise, Rebec were, or should I say are, a cross-pollination of proper early music, Amazing Blondel fandom and more than touch of pop mentality. I recall once debating with Bob Cross the merits of Squeeze and Nick Lowe while he strummed for the local morris side – these guys knew their contemporary as well as their historical sources. Indeed still do, the tracks here maybe a bit more stately and the voices a bit more ragged at the edges, but there's an undeniable charm to songs which concern living high on the hog, endless passion, sailing the high seas, dreams and fancies galore.