

# Making Music Magazine August/September 2009

## CD Review



### TIM STONE EXPOSURE

Label: [www.timstonemusic.com](http://www.timstonemusic.com)  
Cat No: TSM 003

Guitarist / Songwriter Tim Stone's latest CD "Xposure" opens with "Give it away". I am pleasantly reminded of one of my all time favourite artistes J.J.Cale. Both have that easy style of vocal and guitar delivery.

This sets a "swampy" groove and is a good opener. "Sin" says "I've been n..n..n.. knockin' where I can't get in" and is slightly more up tempo but still in the same groove. Tim's low key, breathy vocal style is aptly complimented by his subtle use of his guitar riffs on "Water" and is a really good track. "Early September" leads into "Hackney Rain", this track deviates from the others in style with a localised view of Hackney on a rainy day. "Age of Information" has a nice guitar intro and we're back to Tim's breathy vocals "You believe in the after-life...live forever in paradise" not quite Hackney Tim! I'm half way through the CD now and so far it's proving to be a very good listen with some well thought out songs and arrangements. Tim, it should be pointed out, has a wealth of experience in his musical CV having played with Rick Wakeman, Chaka Khan, Alan Price, Boyzone, Isaac Guillory and many others. On Tim's website he says he was inspired by Isaac's guitar picking. I also worked in the same clubs in the 60's as Isaac and can agree that he was an extremely good artist who in my opinion was not given the recognition he deserved.

Movin on with "Tears", this has a tight percussive intro with a back-beat drum pattern and expounds the virtues or not, of seeking the views of a Fortune Teller. Nice use of guitars in this one, very well arranged. "Serena" is more of a folksy style song with slight strains of a Bert Jansch approach. Good clear, clean guitar and vocal on this one. "Son of a Beach" is the CD's only instrumental and it sets a relaxed mood which would suit a lazy day in a

hammock with a cool Red Stripe. "Make your Day" and we're back to swampy groove which then leads in the penultimate track "In my Skin" - this is almost a psyche track in lyric and delivery and finally, "21st Century Blues" winds up the album.

The CD was produced by Tim and the musicians are: Miles Bould (Drums & Percussion), Scott Firth and Yolanda Charles (Bass), Sirish Kumar (Tabla), Martin Ditcham (percussion), Simone Plummer (Backing vocals) and Tim Stone (guitar, vocals and programming). It is an easy laid back listen with excellent clarity in the production. Everything compliments everything else and heralds another notch in Tim's already substantial musical career. 10 out of 10.

Paul Brett



### GAI TOMS

#### RHWNG Y LLYGRU A'R GLASU

Label: SBENSH  
Cat: sbensh CD001

Gai Toms- Rhwng y Llygru a'r Glasu (In between the age of Pollution and the age of green ideology). Singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Gai Toms, of Blaenau Ffestiniog in North Wales has been entertaining audiences as a member of ska-rock band 'Anweledig' and with his solo project 'Mim Twm Llai' for over a decade. He has enjoyed much success with these but has found his true voice in this Welsh language eco-concept album 'Rhwng y Llygru a'r Glasu' (In between the age of Pollution and the age of green ideology), released on Welsh label Sbensh in 2008.

The songs mainly reflect the environmental issues facing modern society. Numerous samples of television and radio broadcasts concerning the things which trouble him are placed between tracks and Gai has even shown his commitment to the cause by not only producing an album of remarkable musical quality expressing his fears, but by also building a 'Junk Kit' of scrap materials and discarded plastic barrels, which is implemented for percussion throughout. Even the album's packaging and

artwork is made of recycled materials.

Musically 'Rhwng y Llygru a'r Glasu' is a warm collection of beautifully crafted, witty Welsh roots songs blending traditional ideas with blues, country, reggae and rock, all narrated by Gai's deep, raspy vocal tones. There's a multitude of instruments used on the album; from guitars, banjos, double bass, ukulele and harmonicas to computer technology. There's also experimental use of everyday objects as instruments throughout, notably on 'Wailing through half a canoe', the album's opener and 'call to arms' on which Gai does just that, and on the reggae strut of closing track 'Junk Jam.'

Stand out tracks include 'Llosgi' (Burning); a country rocker with a laid back groove on which Gai explains his position on environmental issues "I'm not a hippie or an environmentalist, I was young and I'll be an old man but the way things are going I may not get there..." the laid back blues of 'Take my hand', up-beat country tune 'Ballad of resurrection', cleverly penned 'Norfolk Refugees' and the moody Motown groove of 'My son'. There are some great inferno blues guitar moments on here but some sensitive moments too; like the sympathetic 'Cardotyn' (Tramp) and acoustic guitar instrumental 'Yellue'. 'Rhwng y Llygru a'r Glasu' is an intelligent; warm, atmospheric Welsh language concept album highly recommended, particularly to fans of Tom Waits. I've had it on rotation in my stereo since I received it, and the more you listen to it the better it gets. Gai is currently working on his first English language album.

Dylan Jones



### GRAHAM McCULLOCH SIMPLE SONGS OF LOVE & LIFE

Label: Solent Records  
Cat: SLTCD121

The CD opens with a captivating song called "Aint love cruel" which has that certain magic which makes a song an instant hit.

Graham's singing is perfect for all of the songs he features here, which are beautifully written from a descriptive and emotional viewpoint and yet so simply put together it makes you wonder why you never wrote it yourself. This is of course, the sign of the perfectly crafted song which always appears so simple yet is so hard to write.

Another of my favourites is "Most of the Time" which again, is beautifully sung and very moving, allowing time and space to the lyric which lets you to feel them as you are hearing them, thus making the song immediately captivating. It is simply beautiful and moving.

I really hate to put someone in a box because boxes have a habit of restricting the natural, prolific growth of an artiste. Such artistes can become afraid of leaving their designated box and this acts as a barrier to their exploration of whatever growth may naturally occur. But for the benefit of the reader who at the moment doesn't have a copy of this CD, I will say that Graham could be placed in a similar genre to Bobby Goldsboro with regard to sensitivity and on occasion, even in his singing.

Other songs I liked were "Every last grain of sand" and "She's a mum" both great songs. The whole album is sung and played on guitar by Graham with Bob Brace making a fine contribution on piano/keyboards and violin. Jamie Griffin plays bass and Jack Henson drums. Dave Priddle guests on back up vocals with Alex Katsikides also on bass and drums. It was recorded at Flyte Studio in Brightstone on the Isle of Wight. Engineer was Jamie Griffin and the whole affair was produced by John Waterman.

There are 12 tracks on the CD and it's well worth a listen. I enjoyed it immensely. If I was looking for a song for an artiste, I would look firstly at what Graham McCulloch had to offer and especially if observational sensitivity was the order of the day. Well done to all concerned and what a pleasure it was to listen to. I'd love to see a live performance.

Michele Breeze

