

Jim Gilchrist Review

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FOLK Barbara Dymock: Leaf an' Thorn *** Liftfire

Barbara Dymock was singer with the embryonic Ceolbeg, before pursuing a career in medicine and raising a family. Her second album in recent years sees her collaborating with multi-instrumentalist and producer Christopher Marra, with other contributors including Jenny Hanson on fiddle, accordionist Luke Brady and bassist Calum McKenzie. These song settings, led by Marra's considerate guitar accompaniments, largely do justice to Dymock's warm and clear vocals. Violet Jacob's The Heid Horseman, for instance, is articulated with measured feeling, slide guitar introducing an unexpected but effective element, while Dainty Dounby is ushered round the floor by an unabashed country dance band accompaniment. The upbeat rendering of The Wife of Usher's Well, catchy though it may be, steers the song between Childe balladry and Woodstock, eroding its essentially otherworldly nature. Dymock redeems things, however, with a poised, unaccompanied, rendition of Helen of Kirkconnel.

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