

NEVILLE SKELLY

You might think you know what to expect from the record of a lad from Liverpool, who grew up on a council estate and got lost in music like so many others like him. But if you're thinking that Neville Skelly's magical new album draws upon The Beatles or The La's or anything like that, you'd be wrong. This particular lad draws from a different source, namely that of jazz, of crooners and of big bands. Neville's musical ancestors are not Lennon or McCartney, but Cole Porter and George Gershwin.

Much like the music contained within, the musical genesis of 'Poet The Dreamer' has been far from typical of the path trodden by most young Liverpool musicians. Or indeed, any modern British musicians. Neville cut his teeth not in the traditional dingy gig venues, but in working men's clubs, bars and cruise liners, and in a succession of big bands. This though, did not satisfy the young troubadour, and he returned home in search of something more personal, something musically deeper. He formed a friendship with some of Liverpool's most famous modern sons - The Coral - whose influence and encouragement to write led to a fresh batch of songs and a new, confident direction. Now, only now, Neville Skelly is ready.

The songs on 'Poet & The Dreamer' are drawn from over two decades of writing and are therefore, as you might expect, both varied and strong. The album takes the listener far from its performer's native Liverpool, placing its audience in a lush, melancholy soundtrack of their own imagination. Lap steel guitar glides next to gently strummed acoustic guitars, capturing a languid world-weary beauty. And above all of this, characterising these beautiful songs sits Skelly's winter dream of a voice. Conjuring a world of Cash and Sinatra filtered through a McCartney-esque ear for melody, these are songs which sound lived in, grown rather than simply written. It is testament to the writing on 'Poet and The Dreamer' that original songs like 'Will She Hold Another' (co-written with James Skelly) hold their own next to imaginative covers, like the audacious take on Eleanor Rigby, which is given a dream-like stamp all of Skelly's own.

Favourable reactions have already been forthcoming from MOJO magazine, Ian Broudie and a man you might know by the name of Noel Gallagher. Shortly, it will be your turn to sing his praises. Because make no mistake, Poet & The Dreamer is a simply classic record that will stand the test of time.

Hamish Macbain (NME)

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