

Fusion

JO FROST



Shrewsbury Folk Festival's equivalent to the *Big Brother* house



Various Artists Cecil Sharp Project

Shrewsbury Folk Festival

Full Price (69 mins)

★★★★★

Sharp – and to the point



Earlier this year, a remarkable 'Who's Who' of the new British folk scene assembled in London's Cecil Sharp House. Lined up on stage were Steve Knightley from Show Of Hands, along with Kathryn Roberts, Jim Moray and his sister Jackie Oates, Patsy Reid from the Scottish band Breabach and the squeeze-box exponent Andy Cutting, joined by the Canadian banjo player Leonard Podolak and the fine American singer Caroline Herring. They had just spent a week working together in a house in the English countryside, where they had been asked to write a concept work about Cecil Sharp, England's most celebrated folk song collector.

Cecil Sharp Project is a triumph, both because of the variety in the music, and the way the different folk celebrities work together, constantly performing in different combinations and swapping solos, and because of the quality and originality of their songs. Cecil Sharp is famous for having collected folk songs in England and then in America, at the start of the last century, but little is known about his private life. Yet here his life and work are celebrated with songs that are thoughtful, poignant, funny, and even critical.

The album starts with Steve Knightley's sturdy and unexpectedly moving 'Mining For Songs', explaining Sharp's aim in searching for English folk songs that had moved with immigrants to the Appalachian mountains, and it's followed by another fine song from Jackie Oates, 'Mother England,' a tribute to two sisters who helped Sharp in his research. From then on, the album constantly changes direction. There are examples of the songs Sharp collected in England and America, including a stomping 'Ol' Groundhog' from Podolak, and demonstrations of how the song 'The Lover's Lament' changed as it crossed the Atlantic. Then there are songs about Sharp himself, including Jim Moray's 'Dear Kimber,' a true story of Sharp's sexist approach to female morris dancers; 'Aunt Maria,' a reminder from Steve Knightley that Sharp seemed more interested in white English songs than those of African Americans; a foot-stomping blues about Sharp's vegetarianism and a novelty piece about his (imagined) relationship with his assistant. Then there's a fine modern murder ballad from Caroline Herring, and – best of all – 'The Ghost of Songs,' a moving tribute to all those who gave Sharp their songs.

Robin Denselow ●

TOP
OF THE
WORLD
ALBUM



ASIA ROCKS!

CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS OF THE ASIAN MUSIC CIRCUIT
WITH SHANKAR-EHSAAN-LOY
PLUS SANGEETA DATTA'S AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION OF
TAGORE'S *GITANJALI* AND KARAN & THE KSPARK DANCERS



Bollywood music phenomenon Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy have provided countless soundtracks for Indian cinema, for films from *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Kal Ho Naa Ho* to *West is West*. Having recorded the official anthem for the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup, they appear together in the UK for the first time.

The evening will also feature a live performance by Karan & the KSPARK dancers, and a beautiful dramatic production of Tagore's *Gitanjali* combining film, poetry, music and dance.



Sunday 18th September 2011, 7.30pm

Royal Albert Hall, London

Tickets £10 - £60 on 0845 401 5045

or www.royalalberthall.com

An event by the Asian Music Circuit,
the leading promoter of Asian music in the UK.

Find out more at www.amc.org.uk

Programme subject to change without notice

AMC
Asian Music Circuit

Supported by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND