

Beautiful vocals and harmonies combine for a CD all will enjoy

REVIEW
Beneath the Starry Sky
by Jo Philby

If I was asked to choose a favourite from the 13 tracks on Jo Philby's new CD, *Beneath the Starry Sky*, I would have great difficulty.

This is Jo's second album and although her folk roots are still there, the influence of Americana and Country music can be clearly heard.

Indeed, some of the album was recorded in Nashville, Tennessee by expat Phil Anderson who also added his unique musical style.

Other musicians on the album are Kathie Touin, whose piano playing and arrangements are exceptional, Linda Hamilton playing the cello, Derek Curtis on low whistle, Donal Murphy on accordion, young Orcadian band Broken Strings and last but certainly not least, Elaine Grieve on harmony vocals.

The title of the album is taken from Track one: *Winter Song*, its lyrics describing the passing of the seasons and the joy of spring once winter is over. It is easy to identify with this song, especially living in Orkney, nights drawing in etc.

Track three, *The White Hare*, written by Seth Lakeman, has a great arrangement



and some amazing vocal harmonies.

On Track seven, *The Sleepless Sailor*, Jo is joined by her niece Holly (who was only 7½ years old when it was recorded in 2009). Their vocals sound really beautiful together on this enigmatic song written by Kate Rusby, where you are not sure who, or what, took the sailor away — I would like to think it is a mermaid.

The following track, *The Maid on the Shore*, almost becomes a duet with Jo and

Phil — their vocals fit well together.

I am also drawn to Track 11, *Black Fly* with its haunting melody and complex lyrics. The piano, guitar arrangements and the vocal harmonies on this song are stunning. I love Jo's vocals in *Leaboy's Lassie* and Donal Murphy's accordion complements this track to perfection.

The Longer the Waiting is the last song on the CD and on this track Jo is joined by Broken Strings — the collaboration works well. The combination of Jo's singing with the musical talents of the members of Broken Strings produces a fitting finale.

Beneath the Starry Sky is impressive — in the bio on her website — www.jophilby.co.uk — Jo states: "I've always sung in my own voice, and have never tried to adapt to a different dialect or accent, as that wouldn't be true to myself, or to the songs I had chosen".

I believe this is what this album is all about, beautiful vocals and vocal harmonies, expert musical accompaniment to produce something which I am certain a wide audience will enjoy.

As for my favourite track - it has to be *In the Garden of Heaven*.

GMS