

as a comparative analytical illustration? Although the emphasis on English rather than British folk-rock is explained, I was rather taken aback to learn that, unlike in England, 'notions of cultural identity are not problematic' in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (p.56). Moreover, Burns' overriding focus on Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention, and dismissal of innovative bands like Mr Fox, seems bafflingly myopic. He misses the opportunity to draw upon the richly relevant example of the Albion Country Band, for example, with Shirley Collins' quite unique position as folk-rock innovator from a family musical tradition. One simply cannot discuss English folk-rock by making detailed reference to only two bands and ignoring the intertwining histories and far-reaching tendrils of the

folk scene over the past four decades. Burns also manages to argue that English folk-rock has formed a positive new cultural identity by incorporating multicultural influences, while not even referencing recent innovators in this area such as the band The Imagined Village. Finally, the writing is sadly dogged by woolliness of style, needless repetition, and some truly awful sentences, such as: 'This book follows a Marxian axiom of culture industry hegemony of notional national heritage' (p.11), all of which undermine the reader's confidence in clarity and scholarly rigour. There is some valuable research here for those with the time and energy to excavate it – though you may not wish to part with £65 for the opportunity to do so – but one feels this is a somewhat missed opportunity for a rich

area of research.
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk
Clare Button

Taking Part in Music: Case Studies in Ethnomusicology

ed. Ian Russell & Catherine Ingram

Aberdeen University Press,
 9781857520019

This book consists of papers delivered at the 27th European Seminar in Ethnomusicology held at the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, in September 2011. One of the delights of such conferences is that one doesn't quite know what one is in for until the individual speakers begin their presentations. In other circumstances it might be a ground-

Made in the Great War

Sam Sweeney and others
 RootBeat Records, RBRCD21



EDS featured Sam Sweeney's remarkable Great War violin story in the last issue. But how does the project translate into an album? As with the stage show, Sweeney – alongside fellow musicians Paul Sartin and Rob Harbron, and narrator Hugh Lupton – takes us on an absorbing journey through the life of his fiddle and its maker, Richard S. Howard. Lupton's narration certainly stands up to repeat listening – poetic and engaging, he applies a sharp sense of detail and paints pictures of everything from the loving construction of the fiddle to the grim conditions of trench life at Messines.

The musicians, for the most part, subtly backlight the story – perfectly illustrating the sound of Howard's workshop, for example. But there are times when song takes centre stage, such as on 'The Palace of Varieties', which covers a night at Howard's workplace. The music (rather impressively) sounds like it's coming out of a wireless radio – and Sartin perfectly captures the clipped vocal style of the era's music hall singers. It's the only moment on the CD where you miss the visuals, though, dragging slightly in the absence of the group's amusing stagework. But the translation to CD is otherwise splendid. The story's conclusion is devastating, and Sweeney's vocals shine as much as his playing on the visceral 'The Ballad of Richard Howard', which cleverly alludes to another fiddle-driven story – 'The Cruel

Sister'. The album makes a good souvenir for those who saw the stage show, but it's also a deeply powerful piece of storytelling in its own right – almost impossible to listen to casually – for those that missed out.

www.rootbeatrecords.com

Mark Dishman

Songs for the Voiceless

various

Haystack Records, HAYCD006



The 'voiceless' are those who fought and suffered in the First World War, commemorated here by a group of young singer-songwriters gathered together by Michael J. Tinker of *Bright Season*. It is a thoughtful and well-produced tribute, marking the centenary of the outbreak of war; the artists are touring the album in November.

The underlying sound is predominantly voice and guitar, with harmonium, fiddle and flute on some tracks. The songs are well-crafted and mostly dark-toned and tragic, as befits the stories being told. A welcome flash of the boisterous camaraderie of wartime life comes when The Young 'Uns sing Sean Cooney's 'The King's Horse'. The role of women in the war is acknowledged in Bella Hardy's 'Jolly Good Luck to the Girl that Loves a Soldier', and in the only instrumental track, Tom Oakes' charming 'Harry and Nellie's First Dance'. Odd to find the famous music-hall star Vesta Tilley mis-spelt as 'Vespa' both in the sleeve notes and the accompanying publicity material. This aside, the research and background material on this album is

excellent, combining personal family stories with other contemporary accounts, together with photographs and beautiful sepia-toned design.

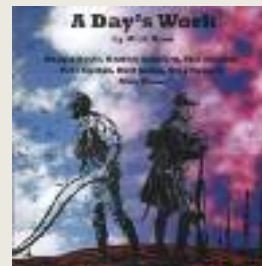
It seems appropriate to end this review with the dedication from the album, which I think will echo all our thoughts: 'Finally, our deepest and humblest gratitude to all those who gave so much in the First World War. This is for you.'

www.haystackrecords.co.uk

Dave Townsend

A Day's Work

Mick Ryan and others
 WildGoose Records, WGS403CD



With the centenary of the Great War, it is very fitting for different communities to pay homage and tribute to the individual stories of normal people who fought. *A Day's Work* is a collaborative album with different generations of folk artists coming together to play musical tribute to such a tragic loss of lives.

Collaboration albums, with big names all coming together on projects has always been a feature of the folk community, and it has been ever increasing over the past couple of years. These types of works always go down well with audiences and gain a lot of popularity. What's interesting about this particular project is that it isn't a 'collection of songs' but rather one huge storyboard. It was originally written in

