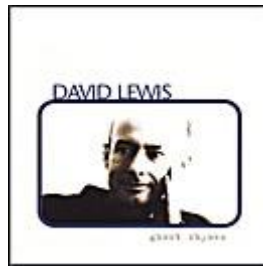


Mp3 David Lewis - Ghost Rhymes



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Melodic, gently reflective acoustic songs in a folk-rock style 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: Ghost Rhymes is the third release from David Lewis, who has been producing collections of melodic and gently reflective songs since the late 1980's. Lewis, who is based in West London, has been described as a writer and singer worth getting to know (Sing Out!), his work as smart song-craft (CD Now). Writing within a modern British folk tradition with strong roots in the 60s and 70s (Sandy Denny, Robin Williamson, Al Stewart, Donovan), Lewis's songs may draw from past folk traditions, but they aim to present a contemporary respite from modern uncertainties. Co-produced by long-time collaborator John Wesley Harding, Ghost Rhymes features Harding and a host of other talented musicians. Ghost Rhymes was recorded in Seattle, San Francisco and Harpenden, UK and it features 13 new songs (three co-written with Harding). Water From the Well and Trying to Remember A Dream feature a full folk-rock band sound, while songs such as Waterwheel, Fever Dream, Something Real and the title track explore a range of acoustic finger-picking styles and tunings. The record reunites Lewis with multi-instrumentalist Robert Lloyd and producer-songwriter Chris von Sneider and also features Seattle legend Kurt Bloch. The CD also includes an ensemble recording of the semi-traditional Welsh song Black Pig. This song was recently discovered by Lewis while going through old family papers and found to have been originally written by Lewis great-grandfather John Owen, a Pembrokeshire bard during the late nineteenth century. About this song Lewis writes: "That song was recorded because I found out a few years ago that my paternal great-grandfather, John Owen, had been a sort of Celtic bard figure in North Pembrokeshire, Wales. I was intrigued to discover that he had become quite well known in the late nineteenth century for writing this particular song, which later became a famous ballad in Wales. My mother had come across some old press cuttings from local newspapers from 1915, around the time he

died, in which people who had known him wrote in to the press with their stories about how and why Owen had come to write the song, which had by then become a kind of traditional folk song and its original authorship had become unclear. (a fragment of one of these cuttings is reproduced on the CD booklet). As is often the way with the folk process, the original authorship of the song has now become rather lost in time (some current recordings seem give it a trad credit only). So I thought that here was a chance to restore the historical record and also have some fun with an old song. Anyway, the point of the song is that Owen was approached by a farmhand from the neighbouring farm who had been wronged by his master and asked if he could write something to get back at him. Asked by Owen for some material about the landowner to write around, the farm-hand told him that he had lost one of his pigs - a black one - in mysterious circumstances recently, and that it had been rumoured the pig had strayed into the landowners storehouse and become fatally drunk on the beer supply! This, it turned out, was the kind of material that my great-grandfather could work with, and he went on to construct a song around the idea of a mock funeral organised for the drunken pig by the heart-broken landlord, in order to ridicule and humiliated the master. The song seems to have been a success - it caught on, and people would later re-write the story to suit their own circumstances. It was quite difficult finding a version of the song, however - but after some research (and a lot of help from my sister) I discovered a written version of the song in a Famous Songs of Wales book (in English, translated by someone going by the rather wonderful name of Sir H. Idris Bell), and a Welsh language pub-rock version by a band called The Moniars. Those were my raw materials. I was listening a lot to the Incredible String Band at that time and I thought it might be possible to record a version of the song in a sort of String Band style, it seemed to suggest that kind of a strangeness to it. So I wrote a new melody for it, took a few parts of the verses that I had, and then wrote my own version of the song, on the mandolin. It didn't sound like the String Band exactly, but that was the inspiration. It was recorded completely live at the last night of the SF sessions, and you can probably hear that we all had a good time doing it." Davids 1996 debut, the acoustic-oriented No Straight Line (Dejadisc DJD 3215), gained a four-star rating in the All Music Guide and a handful of perceptive and positive reviews. Featuring Harding, Lloyd and guests like REMs Peter Buck on mandolin all contributed to creating an acoustic record that also featured unexplained atmospherics... setting up some interesting spooky textures, according to Sing Out! It was followed in 2001 by For Now (Appleseed APR 1057), which continued with the restrained acoustic folk approach but added a more fleshed-out full-band

backing on some songs, and included a gloriously mellow take of Nick Drakes Northern Sky (BBC Radio 2), creating a tasteful and satisfying album (Dirty Linen). Seminal Lewis influence Al Stewart provided second vocal on You Dont Know. Contact: d.lewis@lse.ac.uk myspace.com/davidlewisfornow
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