Alison McMorland & Peta Webb

1 Two Pretty Boys
2 What Can a Young Lassie?
3 Jogging Up to Claudy
4 In London So Fair
5 The Convict's Song
6 Sailing's a Weary Life
7 The Factory Girl
8 The May Morning Dew
9 The Green Banks of Yarrow
10 The Dowie Dens of Yarrow
11 Our Ship is Ready

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Recorded at Riverside Studios, London – engineer Antony David
Photography by Keith Morris

In the field of folk music, as in so many areas of achievement, it is noticeable that – unfairly enough – a man of moderate talents will often be highly thought of whereas, to gain a comparable degree of appreciation, a woman has to have exceptional ability.

Certainly, those women who have been generally recognized are usually outstanding, as this record magnificently demonstrates. Alison McMorland and Peta Webb are two ladies of immense talent and can be counted among the handful, of either sex, who are supreme in their art. Individually they are well respected; together they make that rare blend which is only found in singing of this quality, complementing each other perfectly and, even more rare, each somehow adding to the other to come up with something which is more than a simple combination of two voices. It is only after listening to the whole record that one becomes aware that there is no instrumental accompaniment.

Although coming from different backgrounds they have evolved in the same way through the direct and indirect influence of traditional singers, and share the same enthusiasm for listening to woman singers, whose songs they relate to strongly both in content and style. It is not uncommon, both in Ireland and Scotland, to find women singing together with great closeness of feeling and phrasing. Alison's and Peta's interest and pleasure in the singing of Rita and Sarah Keane, Maggie and Sarah Chambers, and Belle and Cathie Stewart and Sheila MacGregor (The Stewarts of Blairgowrie) have greatly influenced their own work together and ensured that they themselves have become a valuable addition to this list.

My hope for this record is that, as well as being superbly entertaining in the quality of the songs and performances, it will be a source of influence and encouragement for all singers.

Dick Gaughan

Lucy Stewart of Fetterangus has been a particular influence on Alison's singing and **Sailing's a Weary Life** and the very powerful ballad **Two Pretty Boys** come from her. Other songs in the Scots tradition are **The Dowie Dens of Yarrow**, a commonly sung ballad amongst the travellers, learnt from Margaret Stewart; **What Can a Young Lassie?** from Jane Turriff; and the deeply bitter and dramatic **Convict's Song** from Sheila MacGregor.

The Green Banks of Yarrow and **Jogging Up to Claudy** are unusual versions of songs common in both the Scots and Irish traditions.

Peta has been influenced by the various styles of Irish singing and learned the classic emigrant song **Our Ship is Ready** from Mary Toner of Armagh. T**he May Morning Dew** from John Lyons, has proved a great favourite in the Cork/Kerry area where it is said to originate. **In London So Fair**, which surprises by avoiding the usual traps that beset a heroine, comes from Mary Ann Carolan of Drogheda. The woman's strong sense of identity in **The Factory Girl** from Brigid Cunniskey, and her dignified rejection of a superficially tempting offer, particularly appeal to us.

Alison McMorland and Peta Webb

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