



Luka Bloom **"Tribe"** Big Sky Records

In terms of musical construction the contents of **"Tribe"** are something of a radical departure for Luka Bloom since they find him collaborating with another composer, Simon O'Reilly. O'Reilly is an electric guitarist, multi-instrumentalist and composer based in Doolin, County Clare – in addition, Simon produced **"Tribe."** On his web site, County Kildare based Bloom explains how the project evolved – *'In Autumn 2005, I was sent a copy of **"Tide Lines,"** an album of original instrumental music composed and recorded by Simon O'Reilly. Its a lovely record, but I immediately was intrigued with the possibility that Simon and I might do some work together.'* After meeting the pair decided to collaborate, and O'Reilly went on to create and mail instrumental tracks to Bloom who then sought suitable supporting words. At this juncture it's worth noting that, stylistically, O'Reilly's 'music' could best be described as ambient.... while Simon uses mini moog and 'sound programming,' conventional instruments [+] make for a significant 'sonic' presence on **"Tribe."**

The album title track opens the collection and in the first verse Bloom invokes images of dark cloudy skies, flag waving crowds and Irish dancers who kick up their "white heels." In the second he merges century old images of [Dublin] streets that once rang to the sounds of gunfire and rebellion, with contemporary ones of a commemorative parade while relative to 'current day drug culture' in *"..side streets, needles look for veins."* Moving overseas, in the third verse, Bloom mentions that Dublin born Joyce is buried in Zurich, Switzerland while Samuel Beckett, also Dublin born, is interred in Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris, France. In the closing line of the fourth and final verse [*], Bloom's narrator, informs *"Home's a place inside I take it with me,"* while in the preceding lines he references seasonal birds of flight and follows with *"...my tribe is in Pine Ridge, my tribe is in Alice Springs, my tribe is in the heartbeat of all things."* While there is an inherent Irish flavour in [all] the foregoing images, I feel that Bloom means us to look beyond, even, the Celtic nations and focus firmly on all of humankind. Overseen by David Odum [The Frames, Josh Ritter], Bloom recorded his vocals at Black Box Studio near Angers, France and Luka's teenage son, Robbie, provides the backing vocal on "Tribe."

Time wise, set at the turn of a year and bearing a languid tempo, "Sound" possesses a 'poetic' lyric that pays tribute to the art of putting words to music, sic. *"Put a foot upon a spade, Spade into the ground, Follow the trail of worms, Until the rhythm's found, Wait until the word come down."* The words that compose the lyric to "I Am A River" overflow with motion [no pun intended!], and while the ensuing "Change" alludes to falling in love – *"From our saying hello, When the dancing begins, From the meeting of our eyes, To the tingling touch of skin"* – as a parallel, the song could also be interpreted as a tribute to O'Reilly's collaboration with Bloom. Principally featuring electric guitar, violin and cello, "Early Morning" is the first of three instrumentals on **"Tribe,"** and in this instance it's credited to O'Reilly. In terms of subject matter while the word *"she"* does not actually feature in "Out There" it explores the mystery of one day finding someone to love, and is followed by the self-explanatory "Dead Of Night" – *"Every dawn, something magical is gone."* Midway through "Star Of Doolin," the second instrumental, the sound of Yvonne Casey's fiddle rises from nowhere to add a traditional sounding Celtic flavour to the track.

If electronic sounds prevail anywhere on **"Tribe,"** it's as the 'almost discordant' backdrop to the spoken [folk] rap "Homeless." Inspired by the sight of *"a homeless man in Hollywood,"* Bloom's narrator goes on to conclude that the homeless person was *"a survivor"* and *"a model urban citizen,"* while, in relation to the planet's environment 'he,' the narrator, lives a life of excess - *"I on the other hand, I live this life of good intentions, I travel the world, I try to be aware of the Earth, I sing my songs, I look, I hope for change, But out on the road, you know, I fly every day, I drive every day."* A land ravaged by 'on/off' wars is the focus of "Lebanon" and in the closing verse Bloom quotes the uplifting words of Lebanese

American poet Khalil Gibran [b. 1883, d. 1931], while in terms of subjective content – there's just fourteen words - the wordplay on 'rains/reigns' apart, the ensuing [and complimentary] "Peace Rains" is a prayer for nations to live by the tenets of peace and love. All of ninety seconds in length, "**Tribe**" closes gently with the O'Reilly/Bloom instrumental "Beara." Beara, a peninsula in West Cork, is a historically and archaeologically rich tourist destination.

Note.

[+] – That is, as opposed to the electronic sounds that are much used in the field of ambient music.

[*] – Relative to the final verse of "Tribe" as it appears in the liner booklet, in performance Bloom moves the opening line to the end of the verse.

Folkwax Score 9 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 07/07.