

Long Time Getting There Donald Stewart & Chris Boland

own label, DJS001



Fiddle player Donald Stewart has teamed up here with long-time friend and guitarist Chris Boland to record an album of (mostly) his own tunes in the traditional Scottish style. Self-penned tune collections can sometimes reveal that even great musicians do not always produce material that compares well with traditional tunes which have stood the test of time. In this case, however, I was pleased to find that Donald's tunes, while retaining close ties with traditional style, technique and structure, are melodic, original and distinctive, and the compositions generally manage to avoid sounding like plagiarised re-workings of traditional pieces.

I imagine that his success is partly because much of his repertoire has been composed over a period of many years, rather than being hastily compiled for the sake of making an album. This has given the time and opportunity for Donald's compositional skills to be refined and matured. His playing is crisp, confident and perfectly paced. There are a couple of tunes in the less popular key of B flat that are impressive in maintaining a liveliness and flow that illustrate his command of the instrument.

Any player wishing to study the Scottish style would do well to listen to this work, as the distinct decoration in his playing is very clear and controlled. He is accompanied throughout by some nice guitar playing from Chris, whose roots are in Irish music, and who continues to support the Irish music community in Liverpool through his work in Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and also in local sessions. A good spread of reels, jigs, strathspeys, waltzes and airs, together with occasional appearances by accordion, piano and Donald's Stroh violin add up to a nicely varied collection.

www.tradfiddle.com

Neil Brookes

Dutch Callers' Choice Triple Time

Volksdansvereniging, NVS7CD

This is a pleasant CD of country dance tunes by the band Triple Time, who are based in The