

Terry Staunton reviews the 'Shared' album

Shared

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Open mic night at the Horseshoe Inn, an unassuming hostelry in rural Shropshire, so enraptured near neighbour Miles Hunt that it became the springboard for his new acoustic collective, Shared. Acting as producer and session musician, The Wonder Stuff frontman and his violinist partner Erica Nockalls nurture talents fresh and familiar, the pick of which feature on this joyous first "sampler".

There's an unashamedly folk slant to proceedings (a form Hunt himself embraced as early as Golden Green on the Stuffies' 1989 album Hup!), with Rob Dunsford taking a leaf out of Richard Thompson's literate book on Dashboard Therapy and Don't Go To The Other Side Of The World. Timothy Parkes would appear to be another 24-carat find, a Stourbridge boy with an innate understanding of sepia-toned Americana, while Dirty Ray's poetic growl recalls early Tom Waits.

Hunt's longtime friend Wayne Hussey weighs in with stripped-down solo renditions of Mission favourites Tower Of Strength and Trail Of Scarlet that adapt effortlessly to the folk template. More "name" acts are in the running for Shared's second volume, but it may well be the young buck discoveries that prove to be the most compelling.

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