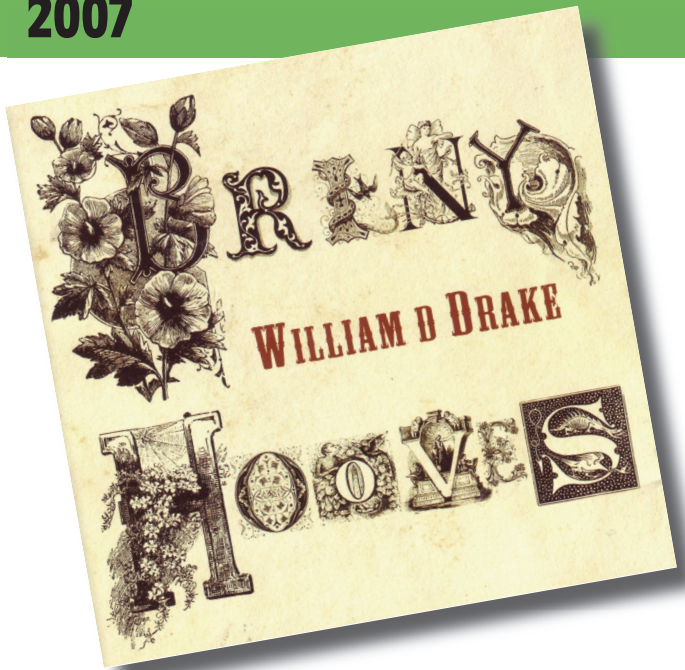


WILLIAM D. DRAKE

BRINY HOOVES

2007



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In modern times, the greatest power invested in musicians is technology. Punk spawned a splintered revolution that reached into many areas and futures. One of which ultimately led to artists being able to record their own music. The result was that musicians were given freedom to record and to disseminate their works – initially via cassette, then CD-R and now over the Internet. This has meant that many more artists can produce albums and gig off the back of them.

Such a democratisation of musical output has meant that there is much more music out there than can ever be heard by a national public, so the downside is that talented musicians can fall through the cracks without receiving their due. And so it is with William D. Drake...

A highly experienced artist, Drake has a strong, 'hardcore' following through his work with the cult band The Cardiacs – who took performance art to a different level back in the nineteen eighties – plus other bands including The Sea Nymphs, Nervous and Wood. Right now though, he's currently part of that other productive musical world, the 'self-published' solo artist.

Lack of major label record company backing means you won't have seen 'Briny Hooves' advertised on the back pages of Q magazine, which means thinking music buyers may well not have heard Drake's

interesting sound. I'm sure he's already been compared to both Julian Cope and Peter Hammill, so I won't fall into such a reductive trap – suffice to say his vocal sound is earnest yet uplifting in a unique way. His song writing is boundary pushing, as this CD on sheBear Records shows...

"I got a band together, Bob Leith, drummer from The Cardiacs, the bass player, Dean Gainsborough Watkin from Nervous - I collected together my favourite musicians," Drake told me. "This album was a real turning point. It was the first time that I'd been able to do exactly what I wanted. There was no time constraint on it."

The reason being that Drake had asked sound engineer, Darryl Anthony, to create the album with him. Anthony's fee was spent on a new Apple Mac which was subsequently used within the recording process that took its own sweet time to complete. Part of the recording for the album was done in Anthony's bedroom. As Drake put it, "He put a batch of old mattresses in there – a Stonehenge of mattresses – which were positioned in a square, acting as a control for both vocals and trumpet. The entire recording process was very acoustic and organic, even though we used the Mac in the chain. We did a lot of remixes for this album."

In fact, this remixing went on for so long, Anthony had, by this time, begun working in a profes-

sional recording studio. One of the most significant items present in the studio that was of great use for the final remix was an old analogue Studer mixing desk which had come direct from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

"Actually, we were mixing one of the tracks on the album, 'The Seashell Song', with this desk and we realised that it sounded miles better than any other track. That was partly because of the quality of the equipment being superior to what we had used before, but also because it was analogue. So we decided to remix the other tracks. The Studer gave the piano, for example, a syrup-like, golden tone. It was wonderful."

This 'tone' was always an unconscious aim. Whilst the music and the songs were of primarily concern, Drake did listen for an analogue sound. "This was enhanced by our use of a valve preamplifier, which we always worked through," said Drake. As such, Drake one day hopes to produce 'Briny Hooves' on vinyl. As yet, he hasn't because, "I can't afford it," he declared. "It will, though, it'll sound so much better on vinyl..."

It's a beautifully crafted album of mature, powerful and moody pop songs – and as yet a largely undiscovered gem. Although it may not be falling off the shelves at your local Zavvi, it's still very well worth reaching out for. To read more, click on www.williamddrake.com. You'll be glad you did. **PR**