AMIDST BRIGHT SHADOWS

Ray Dunne

www.raydunne.co.uk

Ray Dunne is a young man who has clocked up a mammoth amount of musical miles over the past few years. He’s from Kildare, bases himself in Armagh and was blooded on the tough ballad circuit of the Irish pub scene in the UK. That pedigree gives an edge to his delivery, his attitude and his song writing, playing to the often dishevelled Diaspora has helped him focus on the deep meaning of Irishness.

So with that background it comes as little surprise that here we have another strong reminder of our heritage in music, song and sentiment, being kept not only alive but invigorated by another generation. Dunne’s voice has a strength to it that could never be called pretty, smooth or soothing, emotionally charged and edgy, he makes you believe he knows the lyrics from the inside out, this is a voice to grab your collar and demand you pay attention it never attempts to flatter or seduce, quaint it ain’t.

Dunne has the heart of the old style minstrel but he has embodied his songs in the modern rock era. From track 1 Ireland My Ireland his thumping beat is allied to sentiments as old as those of evident in our earliest ballads and love songs.

Old Ways slows it down a tad but that power remains on a lovely song that recalls other times with some lovely lyrics and sentiments. This is strong contender as the standout track that could get Dunne a wider audience. There is similar well-described nostalgia on January Morn and on a more personal level he expresses himself very well on Just Thinking. The album is quite nicely topped and tailed with the final track called A Sense of Reality.

Ray Dunne ably assisted by a wonderful ensemble present a brilliant showcase of his writing and performing talent on this collection of ten songs.

Nicky Rossiter