



MANNING

The Root, the Leaf & the Bone
FESTIVAL RECORDS

This is the 14th Manning album as many years, and it is amazing how Guy Manning keeps up the momentum and the quality of his work.

The original concept for this album was based around the idea of a faded village, lost beneath the march of progress. It soon grew into a more general concept about the nature of change.

Opening with the title track, it is a long piece that starts slowly and then opens up to tell the story of the village, overtaken by expansion

and the inevitable redevelopment and modernisation. As ever there are comparisons to be made with Jethro Tull, but that is never a bad thing in my book. Some nice melodies come through with great flute work from Steve Dundon and fiddle from Ian Fairbairn.

'Decon (struction) Blues' reflects on what is lost when things are demolished in the name of progress. It is a fast paced number with a catchy 'don't tear it down' chorus line. 'Autumn Song' is a slower melancholic piece about the passage of time. It's beautifully constructed and features a guest appearance by Chloe Herrington of Knifeworld on bassoon.

'The Forge' considers the loss of craftsmanship as the concept of mass production takes over. It has another one of those great melodies that Guy is so good at creating, and the sounds of a forge have been worked into the rhythmic percussion. The track also features a notable contribution from Marek Arnold of Toxic Smile who contributes saxophone on the whole album.

'Old School' tells of a miserable

boarding school experience and features a solo by John Young. 'Palace of Delights' looks at the village shop, and how time can sometimes stand still. These emporiums don't seem to change. The jazzy feel is enhanced here by Arnold's saxophones.

'The Huntsman & The Poacher' has a pronounced folky feel. This is followed by a ghost story in 'Mists Of Morning Calling To The Day'. Finally 'Amongst The Sleepers' describes a stroll through a graveyard while reflecting on those we have known.

There is a lot going on with cellos and trumpets adding to the melting pot of instrumentation already mentioned. It is all superbly controlled under the watchful eye of Guy Manning who never loses his focus and has produced another fine piece of work. **MB**

Manning will be appearing with The John Young Band and a three-piece acoustic Phideaux at The Wesley Centre in Maltby for the CRS on 16th November and at The Peel on 17th November.