

Shirefolk

BRIAN PETERS AND JEFF DAVIS
Sharp's Appalachian Harvest
Pugwash PUGCD 009



In the summers of 1916, 1917 and 1918, Cecil Sharp and Maud Karples journeyed into the Appalachian Mountains of the eastern United States to note down old British ballads that had been taken there by emigrants some 150 years before. In that time, they collected an astonishing 1600 songs and tunes. This CD represents a small but significant sample from the collection.

I have always found it remarkable that for all that a century and a half had passed (and now nearly another), nearly all the versions of songs are so similar to those known to us. In particular, 'The False Knight Upon the Road' is very close to a version that we know these days.

I wasn't aware of a Brian Peters/Jeff Davis partnership before now and have been pleasantly surprised as to how well their voices blend, not to mention the superb musicianship between them.

In the 14 tracks, the material covers the broad spectrum of the Collection, from children's songs (such as 'Play Party Medley' and 'A Frog Went A-Courting'), ballads (including 'William Taylor' and 'The Green Willow Tree'), fiddle tunes, jigs ('Sugar Babe' and 'Johnson Boys') and even a Gospel song ('Hold On' or 'The Gospel Plough'). All in all, I have enjoyed the production and consider it to be a good introduction to the Atlantic crossing of all that material all those years ago.

The CD package has a little booklet tucked away full of interesting details about the singers and the songs as well as some wonderful photographs. To buy the package contact Brian at www.brian-peters.co.uk, Jeff at www.jeffdavisoldmusic.com, or buy from BP and JD at their gigs or, if you're very lucky, at a performance of the 'Sharp's Appalachian Harvest' show.

Tony O'Neill