

WEST OF EDEN

Songs from Twisting River

West of Music WOMCD8

12 Tracks, 48 Minutes

www.westofeden.com

The latest collection from the Gotenburg based outfit West of Eden sees the Swedish Celtic inspired collective transferred into the Yorkshire hills of Barnsley. The key here is the Rusby connection as not only does Songs from Twisting River have the guest appearance from the nightingale Kate Rusby and her partner Damien O'Kane mans the production seat. The album also was recorded in Pure Records Studios and engineered by Joe Rusby.

However the album idea to cut in England was West of Eden's as describes their independent attitude that has helped them survive changing fashions, line ups and musical trends. The mood is low key and acoustic but it still bristles and pulses with the characteristic energy and brio in Spelling Song and River Fowey. Jenny Scahub's vocals still have the Sandy Denny touch in the clarity and mood but her enunciation has a crisp Scandinavian burr that separates her from the pack on Bird of Passage and Sycamore Bay. Martin Scahub's vocals on Song for a Rover blend well into the Celtic/Bluegrass/Thompsonesque map while Kate Rusby guests on The Bee that Stung and Michael McGoldrick blows his flute and whistles occasionally and Ron Block from Union Station hangs a Bluegrass banjo around Black Boat. Musically and lyrically the album breathes a fresh consciousness of space and remove that revives West of Eden's approach.

The touches of sweetness and light are the obvious attractions on Songs from Twisting River but there's plenty of iron still intact behind their Swedish velvet.

John O'Regan