

WEST OF EDEN

The West of Eden Travelogue

Zebra Records ZAB 851

www.myspace.com/westofedenband

The West of Eden Travelogue is a neatly monikered fifth album from an underrated Swedish folk rock band. The Gothenburg based outfit have created a rich and powerful body of music that has yet to reach the mainstream or gain wider exposure. What initially impressed me about West of Eden was their seamless evocation of folk rock idioms past and present from the balmy late 60's sounds of Fairport Convention to 90's exponents like The Corrs and Capercaillie. Their effortless border crossing and the melodic voice of Jenny Schaub provided for one of the freshest breezes blowing from northern Europe.

The West of Eden Travelogue sees them five albums in and still refusing to rest on their laurels as they introduce new musical elements most notably a contemporary gothic rock and industrial slant, this adds a surprisingly rocky sound to tracks like 'Hawthorne Heights' and 'Shellcast Bay' the latter sounding like a Celtic flavoured Evanescence, with its big stadium rock chorus and gothic rock sound effects. Jenny Schaub's melodic vocals always place the sound within the folk rock garrison. The rustic traditional folk rock and Irish flavours cruise through Jimmy's Van and Broken sky over Waterville' both evocative of travel inspired pieces set in Ireland. Here the Celtic rock charm of their debut album 1997's classic West of Eden is revisited stylistically.

Musically rich and varied with a palate including fiddle, accordion, keyboards, bass, guitar and drums behind Jenny and Martin Schaub's evocative personalised travelling tales of childhood wonderment, romantic dissolution.. the sound is completely human, forthright and honest. This is a band to take to your heart, playing quality material with passion and composure. Criminally overlooked and underrated West of Eden is probably the best living example of the folk rock genre in action; The West of Eden Travelogue neatly proves this point with effortless precision.

John O'Regan