

Wish You Were Here

Postcards from Godley Moor, Alula Down

I first saw Alula Down in a cold warehouse playing third on an evening of strange music. (It was reviewed by Alistair Fitchett, here:

<http://internationaltimes.it/trappist-afterland-alula-down-and-the-diamond-family-archive/>) Their ethereal drones, field recordings, homemade instruments and Mark Waters' double bass underpinned Kate Gathercole's breathy and expansive vocals and I was bewitched. So much so that I bought *Homespun*, their 2019 album which comes in a box accompanied by a fold-out lyric sheet and a dried flower.

Whilst the album wasn't as strange or intriguing as the live set, I was engaged enough to download their other recordings, and when *The Guardian* recently reviewed their new album *Postcards...*, I purchased it and was fortunate enough to receive the physical postcard set as one of the first 50 purchasers. (Don't worry, you get PDFs of the cards with every download.)

Postcards from Godley Moor is an astonishing product of lockdown. It's six tracks include a couple of addictive folk songs, a paean to a dead cow, and a couple of aural postcards of the landscape: rain, thunder, ambulance sirens and the wind blowing through trees all feature here, layered in the mix behind songs, or highlighted for their own sake, with unobtrusive voices, harmonium or ukulele weaving through the recordings. This seemingly simple music is careful, considered, accomplished and original.

One of the printed postcards notes that 'increasingly the music we make has become process – exploring and describing this moment in this place.' It is this sense of *now*, of rootedness and belonging, of listening and singing with the landscape around the band's home that permeates this music and makes it so special. *Postcards...* is fragile, transient and a suitably astonishing record of and response to these troublesome times.

Rupert Loydell

You can buy the album at <https://aluladown.bandcamp.com/album/postcards-from-godley-moor-summer-2020>