

Luke Daniels Revolve & Rotate

Described by Songlines as “a future classic” and by Acoustic Magazine as “an enchanting delight” ★ ★ ★ ★ award-winning singer and composer brings his solo show which uses an original 19th century Polyphon machine as part of the performance. Live, clockwork and sampled sound beautifully crafted into modern morality tales and intriguing instrumental music. Luke’s work as a member of the Cara Dillon Band or Riverdance Orchestra sets his pedigree at the very highest level and promises a night of outstanding acoustic songs and music.



The **Polyphon** is a disc-displaying music box, a mechanical device manufactured in Leipzig, Germany in 1880. Disc projections, called plectra, engage with a series of ratchet-like star wheels, that, when moved through 40 degrees on their axis, pluck 120 teeth on the instruments bed plate and comb, these teeth then resonate, sounding predetermined notes. Upon the musical comb, the fast treble notes are sounded furthest from the centre and the slower base notes nearest the centre. Newly manufactured 19 and 5/8th inch diameter steel discs rotate at 1.4 rpm and perform the first new music written for Polyphon in over a century.

Luke Daniels: Revolve & Rotate review – modern morality tales and intriguing instrumentation

★★★★

Folk music



Unexpectedly complex ... Luke Daniels and his Polyphon machine

Luke Daniels is a composer and multi-instrumentalist who has appeared on film soundtracks and with the Cara Dillon Band, but is now an impressive singer-songwriter. His new album matches modern morality tales about greed with reminders of his skill on guitar, piano and zither banjo. And there's an unexpected new addition. The Polyphon is a 4ft-high mechanical disc-playing music box, developed in Germany in the 19th century, which sounds like a combination of tinkling, high-register keyboards and glockenspiel. Daniels has written the first new music for the machine in 132 years, using digital technology to add in vocals or other instruments. Here he includes a series of drifting, unexpectedly complex instrumental pieces for the Polyphon, which is also used to provide backing for the traditional Canadee-I-O and a self-written story of contemporary survival, Fifteen Hours in a Supermarket. An intriguing, original set.

[lukedanielsmusic](#)
Canadee I O

PMS
 ARTS COUNCIL
 1966-2020
 Luke Daniels

LUKE DANIELS
Revolve & Rotate

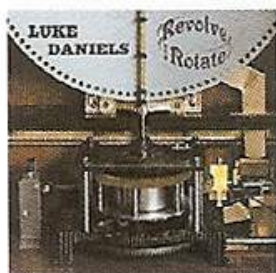
Those That Takes
 Three Servants
 Of This Town That We Love
 Revolve & Rotate Part 1
 Fifteen Hours in a Supermarket
 Nostrodamus
 Stone & Quarter
 Canadee I O
 Revolve & Rotate Part 2
 Full
 Regular
 We Fall Down
 daniesmusic.com
 Cookie policy

Luke Daniels Revolve and Rotate

Gael Productions Ltd (51 mins)



*New songs from Victorian
music-box boffin*

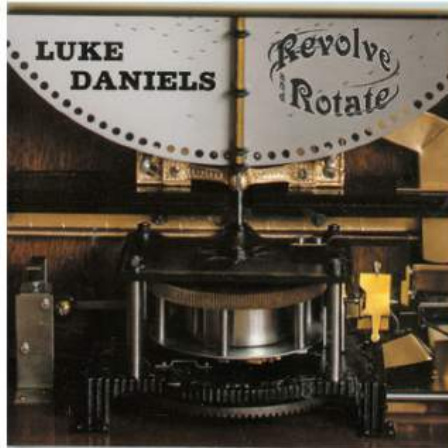


Luke Daniels' last album *What's Here, What's Gone* found him evolving from a well-respected button accordion

virtuoso to a more-than-respectable contemporary singer-songwriter. Lest he might conceivably be accused of resting on his laurels after producing such a striking album, he's apparently spent the last year or so finding and painstakingly restoring a rare 19th-century music box called a polyphon, then reverse engineering the Victorian technology in order to write the first full piece for the instrument in well over a century. The instrument makes an interesting musical contribution to tracks here, such as the original 'Fifteen Hours in a Supermarket' and the traditional 'Canadee I O', based on the Nic Jones arrangement. For my money, though, the real backbone of the album consists of Daniels' increasingly muscular own songs, where he's more conventionally backed by the likes of James Fagan. More than a few, notably 'If This Town That We Love' or 'Three Servants', already sound like future classics.

KEVIN BOURKE

TRACK TO TRY *Fifteen Hours in a Supermarket*



Revolve & Rotate

Luke Daniels

Gael



What an enchanting delight this is, a collection of fine new songs from melodeon player and singer-songwriter Luke Daniels.

The album is strikingly unusual in one sense: Daniels plays guitar, piano and five-string zither banjo, with back-up from other musicians; and, in the unusual part, programmes an authentic Polyphon machine from the late 19th century to accompany himself. This task involved writing new music for the Polyphon for what is said to be the first time in 130 years, and putting that music onto the plucking discs that produce the music.

The results are worth whatever trouble the task took, and the songs are robust and lovely, with stand-out tracks being opener Those That Takes, Stone & Quarter, Fifteen Hours In A Supermarket, Nostradamus and the title track, which makes fullest use of the mechanical marvel.

Daniels' voice is rich and strong throughout, and the songs suggest the noble likes of John Martyn, Richard Thompson, Nic Jones and Martin Carthy – although surely none of them has ever co-opted a Polyphon.

Polyphonic indeed.

Julian Cole



LUKE DANIELS

Revolve & Rotate Gael Linn GAELCD016

Former BBC Young Tradition Award winner Luke made his name as a melodeon player, but nowadays he's increasingly recognised as a skilled guitarist and songwriter, all the while cultivating a more-than-sideline in intriguing musical collaborations and fascinating, genuinely unique projects. The latest of these involves the incredibly painstaking restoration of the polyphon (a late-19th Century disc-playing music box), the operation of whose mechanism is inventively integrated with 21st Century technology (syncing etc).

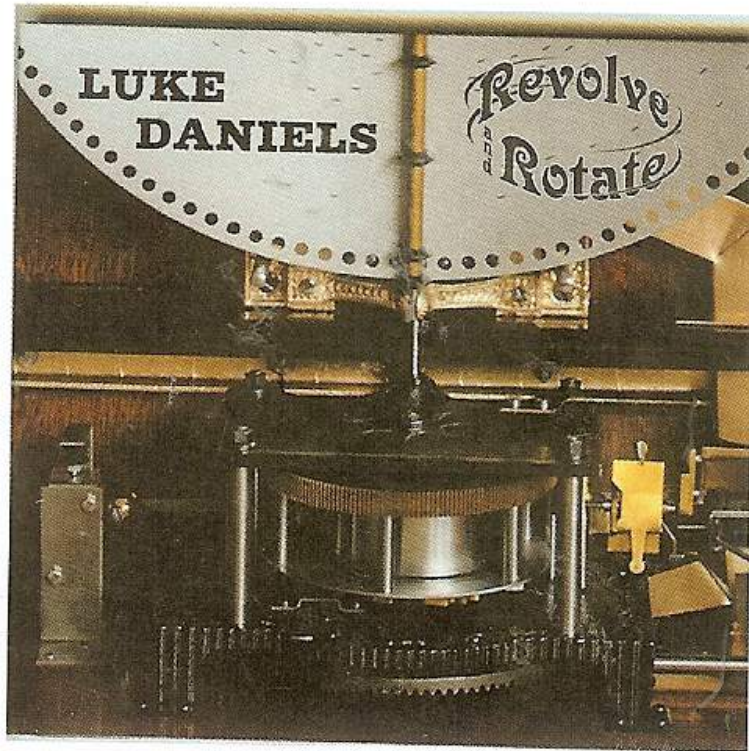
The instrumental title track is ostensibly the album's *raison-d'être*, if only in that it's the principal opus featuring the polyphon, whose sound is at once comfortingly familiar and other-worldly and exotic, both gamelan-like in its chiming and redolent of an antique-and-curio bygone age, and, when combined with the textures of electric guitar or five-string zither banjo, exquisitely experimental. So it feels a little strange to find the suite's three movements sandwiched amidst the other tracks almost as interludes rather than being presented as a main dish on the menu.

Luke also brings the polyphon into the texture for a restless, glittery treatment of *Canadee-I-O* and for his own composition *Fifteen Hours In A Supermarket*, which inhabits a world of quirky observational whimsy.

Elsewhere, away from the polyphon, we encounter *Nostrodamus*, a take on the post-Al-Stewart parallel universe, and companion piece *Stone And Quarter*, a rousing anthem-like reflection on the ages; then, on the modern-day parable *Three Servants*, we can audibly trace, in Luke's vocal delivery, the lineage of traditional singers on down to Damien Barber. Such is the strength of Luke's songwriting here that by the album's close I hadn't clocked that Luke doesn't touch the melodeon anywhere on the disc (instead that instrument's played by Julian Sutton on three tracks). Other guest musicians include James Fagan, Ian Stephenson, James Mackintosh and Martin Douglas. And yet, those songs accompanied by Luke on the piano and involving Phil Bancroft (tenor sax) or Rufus Huggan (cello) seem almost to belong to a different disc; fine compositions nonetheless, they don't spoil the overall unity of the release.

A striking, assured and often very bold record, which convinces us not to underestimate Luke's talents or achievements.
www.lukedanielsmusic.com

David Kidman



LUKE DANIELS

REVOLVE AND ROTATE

WWW.LUKEDANIELSMUSIC.COM

Luke's a respected melodeon, guitar and piano player, who's restored a Polyphon, a large 19th century mechanical German music box, and somehow developed a computer program to cut new discs. It is, at first sight, a little wacky but the results are impressive. Luke sings with one of those reedy, resonant folk voices, and on 'Three Servants', accompanying himself on guitar, sounds uncannily like Nic Jones. The plot thickens when the Polyphon supplies a twinkling backing on the beautiful 'Canadee I O'. The Polyphon doesn't quite steal the show, but on the beautifully bewitching title track, the notes ringing as if suspended on invisible silken chord, it comes near to it. **JP**

A constant.

Reviews

Luke Daniels

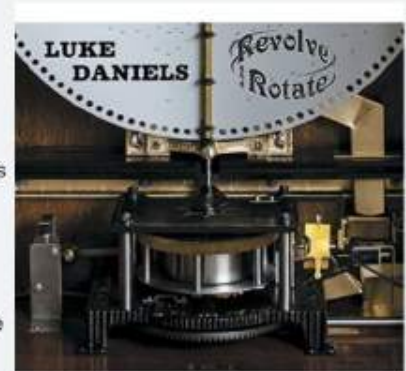
Album: Revolve And Rotate

Label: Gael Productions

Tracks: 12

Website: <http://www.lukedanielsmusic.com>

When it comes to taking on something unique and original, Luke Daniels' recent endeavours must rank right up there in the top tens of fascinating projects. He may be a character familiar to many in the folk world yet there's much more to him than as a Cara Dillon melodeon sidesman - a role which really is just the tip of the iceberg; his guitar playing, which features heavily on the new album, has always been a treat when he goes solo and now with 'Revolve & Rotate' he's undertaken a task at which many hardier souls would have balked.



Having seen Luke play a couple of gigs at Bury Met as support to Lau, essentially road testing the show, the songs and perhaps more importantly, the hardware, it's enlightening to see the recorded output from his labours. Like a much calmer than Back To The Future's Doc Brown, he twisted and twiddled with all manner of discs, settings and combined with a laptop, held the audience spellbound as he plucked sounds from his hat which felt like you were at the birth of something special. The combination the old and the new both bold one and inventive.

It's well worth doing the research and finding out a little more about one of the first disc playing musical contraptions dating from the late 19th Century. It's not worth attempting to paraphrase the technical details at this point, suffice to say that in using software to create co-ordinates for the polyphon's 19" steel discs and combine the two technologies must have been a painstaking and at times laborious and frustrating process. However, the results are quite flabbergasting and nothing like the folk, the music world in general to be truthful, will have seen or heard before. A genuinely unique piece of work resulting in an album of original music, bar the trad. 'Canadee I O' which also gets the polyphon treatment. In fact the latter is perhaps one of the highlights, the trad. world combining with a familiar melody played out on guitar and programmed into the polyphon could be the embodiment of exquisite.

The polyphon itself appears on 'Revolve & Rotate' parts 1, 2 and 3 and the superbly intriguing 'Fifteen Hours In A Supermarket'; the latter switching between the mundane and the keenly observed. The combinations of polyphon and electric guitar or 5 string zither has an element of avant-garde improvisation and experimentation about them; it's edge of your seat listening stuff as you strain to guess where the music is going to take you. Strangely enough, the polyphon introduces a sound which seems almost immediately recognisable. The musical box sparkle and percussive notes create a familiar fairground carousel atmosphere and it would be easy to be dazzled and skip some quality songwriting in the rush to hear what the fuss over the polyphon is all about.

A superb pairing of songs starts with 'Nostradamus', an ominous Dylan-like tirade although the "I don't know but I've been told" line might have old rockers make a mental follow up with a line about a big legged woman who ain't got no soul (a la Led Zep's 'Black Dog'). Followed by the lengthy 'Stone & Quarter' which has a much more pastoral feel, they are typical of the road he's taken to follow up the promise displayed in 'What's Here What's Gone'. It's a testament to his ever growing confidence and assuredness in his role as a singer-songwriter that all trace of melodeon is gone. Yes, he's pulled along a few guests to add some decoration to his own self-assured playing - James Fagan and Ian Stephenson on their respective stringed specialities and there's also Julian Sutton's melodeon - and in 'Revolve & Rotate' Luke has created an intriguing collection.

Mike Ainscoe

Luke Daniels Youtube links

Producing new music for Polyphon

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw_hXDKXcsM

Clockwork vs digital demo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WA5t9VuUoQ>

Luke Daniels - In Our Hearts Solo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5CHy97lOul>

Luke Daniels - Art of Trio Reels

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fpG41LwhAg>