



Album Review The Relatives - "Virtually" – RelativesRecords / Burning Shed)

What's halfway between the USA and the UK? Deep water. Lots of it. And, the new Relatives album, **Virtually**.

But even though they mix the pop Americana of Steely Dan with the quintessential Englishness of Canterbury, the Relatives never seem to be out of their depth.

Album opener "**Going Down**" quickly establishes the clean yet groovy beat of snappy drums and rhythmic horns of vintage Steely Dan, and follower "**Leading the Fight**" adds a beautiful piano intro to the mix. The largely sax lead "**Stately Waltz**" remains in American jazz territory, but then some dramatic guitar lines start off "**When?**" and you realise that Phil Miller is indeed playing on this album. Quirky and melodic yet still with that groove underneath, this is the track where the Relatives really combine their inspirations into something unique. Wonderful stuff!

Next track, "**Spaghetti**", is another highlight, a flute-driven Camel-esque ditty where Miller's guitar evokes a Hatfield & the North daydream. Possibly my favourite!

On "**New Dawn**" the Relatives again show how they can make opposites meet, whereas "**New Ship in Town**" stays more firmly on the other side of the pond and is the track that does least for me here.

But when **Richard Sinclair's** lone voice opens "**On My Mind**", you immediately feel that tingling down your spine and know that this is what you're here for. Six minutes of pure and perfect Canterbury pop!

This album virtually builds a mid-Atlantic beachhead. You may or may not have relatives on both sides, but I urge you to get your feet wet!

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