

GORDON GILTRAP & OLIVER WAKEMAN

Farncombe Music Club, Farncombe

I first heard Gordon Giltrap's music over thirty-five years ago, sneaking his latest album out of my brother's bedroom when he wasn't looking. The album in question was *Fear Of The Dark*, one of four recorded forays into the world of prog rock in the late 70s and early 80s. Back then, Giltrap was touring with a band that included Roxy Music's John Gustafson and Marillion's Ian Mosley. Alas, at that time I was far too young for my parents to consider the possibility of attending a gig.

As I grew older, the musical and economic climates changed and touring with a band ceased to be an option for Giltrap. And so, for me, a gig-going dream remained unfulfilled. Until last year's album collaboration with Oliver Wakeman and a supposedly one-off set at the Summer's End Festival raised hopes again. The festival set was such a success that a full-band tour was arranged for the spring. Backed by prog rock luminaries Paul Manzi (Arena) and Threshold's Steve Anderson and Johanne James, an evening of quality musicianship was guaranteed, but could it live up to so many years of anticipation?

The answer was a resounding "Yes!" From the start of *Ravens & Lullabies'* 'Moneyfacturing' to the classic Giltrap track, 'Heartsong' (the inevitable encore), this was clearly a group of musicians enjoying one another's company – and the music. Across a set culled from both artists' careers, the performers betrayed only a few opening-night nerves. Wakeman and Giltrap had scope to impress with their virtuosity yet they each supported the other sensitively, playing for the songs, not for their egos. A long time coming, perhaps, but this spectacle was well worth the wait.

Trevor Raggatt