

Transkapela

Neon Fields

Transkapela (50 mins)



Folky Poles bring the city to the countryside



The Polish group Transkapela, led by *cimbaly* (cimbalom) player Robert Wasilewski, has received strong

commendations in this magazine for their previous albums *Sounds and Shadows* (2005) and *Over the Village* (2007). It was their rough-edged authenticity on cimbalom, fiddles, guitar and bass that impressed. In this new album, they are connecting the traditional world of Carpathian music with a modern, urban one, as the juxtaposition of the album's title suggests. Here, their traditional line-up is rendered urban by some repetitive minimalism, percussion and jazzy improvisation.

The opening track, 'Quite a Ride', sets the tone badly with a paucity of content and a repetitive two-bar violin ostinato that drives you mad. But it's followed by 'Via Lui Popa Nai', a Romanian-inspired track that is dynamic and groove-driven, mixing pertinent fiddle and cimbalom improvisations with traffic noises and a guest trombone solo. It really is magic, eventually dissolving in a puff of cimbalom smoke. Though there are some beautiful moments, not many of the other tracks have a similar level of invention. But hats off to them for trying something new; there's great musicianship on display from fiddlers Ewa and Iga Wasilewska.

SIMON BROUGHTON

TRACK TO TRY *Via Lui Popa Nai*