

Traditional Fiddle Music of the Scottish Borders

FROM THE PLAYING OF TOM HUGHES OF JEDBURGH

by Peter Shepheard

Published by Taigh na Teud. Visit www.scotlandsmusic.com and www.springthyme.co.uk

Reviewed by Lori Watson (www.loriwatson.net)

GROWING UP IN THE BORDERS, the fiddle playing of Tom Hughes and other local musicians has been, and remains, a huge inspiration for me. I am delighted that the excellent LP released in 1981 by Springthyme (now well-worn and out of print) has been followed up with this new book and CD put together by Pete Shepheard and published by Taigh na Teud.

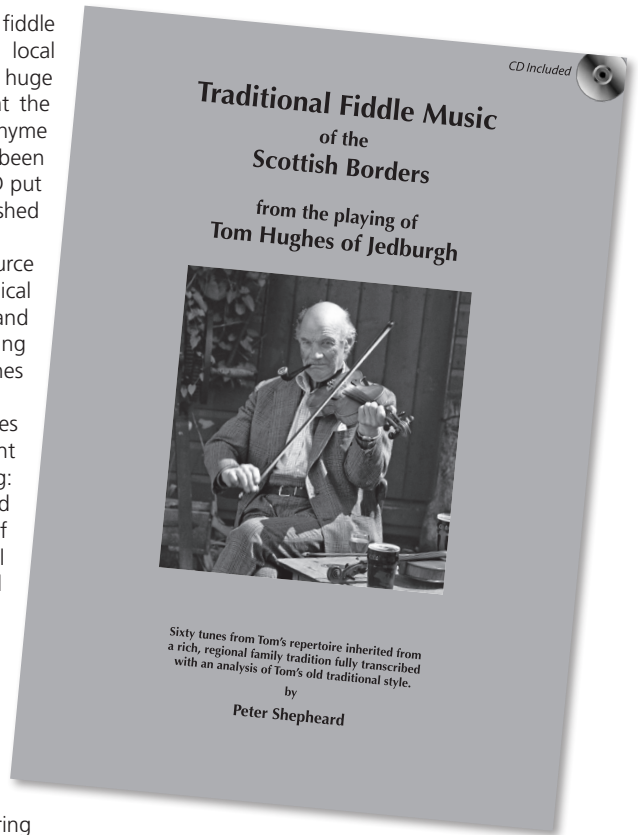
This is a rich and much-needed resource providing a wealth of story, biographical information and cultural, social and geographical context for the continuing story of Borders music and for the 56 tunes and various settings in this collection.

Importantly, Shepheard contributes an in-depth update to current understandings of Borders fiddle playing: the detailed transcriptions of recorded performances and descriptions of isolated techniques as well as overall sound and performance, derived through careful analysis, are invaluable. Techniques discussed include: Unisons, drones, Double Stops, fiddle chords, grace notes, Birls, and bowings such as Hack, Slur, Shuffle, Snap, Long, Spiccato, and Up and Down-Driven.

Tom's grandson, Jimmy Nagle, himself a wonderful fiddle player with his own Borders-related and inspiring playing style, adds another layer of value to the collection.

The 35 track CD is a treasure trove of great tunes, engaging style, joyful and intricate phrasing, beautiful harmonies, liveliness and warmth. Our perception of Borders music is becoming more colourful and vibrant. As awareness of the music grows, especially among the current cohort of young players coming out of the Borders, this release is a very welcome and vital addition.

It is exciting to have a well-produced and



accessible book and CD which will help Borders music to reach a wider audience. All credit to Pete Shepheard and to Taigh na Teud. It would be great to see more projects like this one.

This collection is an open invitation to musicians of any tradition to enrich their playing with the tunes, ideas, techniques and inspiration it contains and as a long-term scholar and player of Borders fiddle music I'm delighted to be renewing my acquaintance with Tom Hughes's playing.