

New album reveals home thoughts from abroad

John Rae might have been based in New Zealand for the past fifteen years but for the Edinburgh-born drummer his homeland is never out of sight, out of mind.

The new album that Rae has created with his partner in music, pianist Ben Wilcock, *Splendid Isolation* was deliberately released on Burns Day, a Thursday, making a break from the traditional Monday or Friday release date.

And when it came to adding guitar to three of the album's fourteen tracks, Rae and Wilcock approached Dundee-based Kevin Murray, who sent his contributions by email.

"The best jazz is made when all the players are in the same room," says Rae. "That's been the case since the music emerged from New Orleans, of course. At the same time, though, if the technology is there, you might as well use it. We knew Kevin would instinctively know what was required and he worked very fast to complete the tracks. He also mastered the album for us, so it's been a real Transworld collaboration."

As won't be surprising given the album's title, other musicians contributed to the recording from their own splendid isolation. Former Black Seeds saxophonist Jabin Ward sent his file from his new home in Ireland and there were contributions from different parts of New Zealand.

Other Scottish links are celebrated in the tune *Apple Road*, a tribute to Rae's father, the well-known bassist Ronnie Rae, and Rae's *Tak a Minute* sounds like a Scots expression but actually refers to the Indian *konnakol* rhythmic language that

the tune is based on.

The album which is released on Rae and Wilcock's Thick Records label, was recorded over two years and Rae and Wilcock are pleased with the results.

"There are elements of both chaos and beauty on it and again, that's true of a lot of jazz," says Rae. "We set out to make an album that reflects both Ben and my musical experiences over the years and at the same time looks forward. It's jazz for the twenty-first century and already we've had positive feedback from as far afield as Atlanta, Newcastle and Melbourne. So think we might have achieved our aims."



SPLENDID ISOLATION

JOHN RAE AND BEN WILCOCK

