

Whisky Hearts Album Sleeve notes by Irvine Welsh

A few summers ago, I was in the Canomills shop of my pal, Sandy, the fashionable Edinburgh district of Muirhouse's greatest ever hairdresser. And no, it wasn't a business call. Being a real Muirhouse boy, Sandy has a great taste in music, and always has some interesting stuff on. I was bowled over by the passion blasting out from the demo of *Whisky Hearts*, which he explained was by a local guy, Dean Owens from Leith, who was causing a bit of a stir.

It wasn't hard to see why. The songs resonated with the beauty and power that only a truly committed writer and performer can bring to the table. I immediately obtained a copy of the songs and I've been a fully-paid up member of Dean's growing and diverse fan base ever since. *Whisky Hearts* is treasure chest brimming with rare gems. *Raining In Glasgow* has to be the most beautiful song ever written about that city, haunting and evocative. You can shut your eyes and see yourself coming into Queen Street Station, the rain battering off the big Scotrail train windows. My personal favourite though, is *The Man From Leith*, a touching son-to-father tribute. A very personal song from Dean, but he could have been writing about my dad or thousands of other Leith men. My eyes mist up every time I play it. And I have a lot of fun with *Beth On A Trampoline*, as that's my wife's name. The album in general exudes a warmth and humanity that seems at a premium in these often cold, insecure and paranoid times. I put it on whenever I feel blue, and soon I'm back into song-and-dance mode.

Whisky Hearts is a testament both to Dean's artistic diversity, and his own distinctive voice and sound. You could spend all day picking through the folk, rock n roll, blues,

country and punk influences, but I think of him as a white soul boy, because every time he sings a song, he's not messing around or showboating, he means it and feels it with every fibre of his being. Now *that* is something special.

Cheers, Dean, you've brought along the heart, so the whiskies are on me.

Irvine Welsh