

# Albums

ETHAN GOLDING



**NOSO - Stay Proud Of Me**

If there were one word I would use to surmise **NoSo's** debut album, *Stay Proud Of Me*, it would be tender. It is not unusual for artists to be confessional and the struggle they are often faced with how to temper vulnerability with strength so as to avoid the kind of sickly

sweet taste in the mouth when an artist seems to be wallowing or enjoying their own willingness to share. A balance which Abby Hwong manages to find, resulting in a collection of reassuring and confident tracks.

Soaring instrumentals with punchy and dynamic vocals makes

*Stay Proud Of Me* a much easier listen than perhaps its lyrical content would suggest. A bedroom pop approach to production allows the album to get out of its own way at most opportunities resulting in a promising first release from an artist with potential.

JOHN BRERETON



**FIFA 100 - FIFA Records Compilation**

No, it's not the corrupt governing body for football flouncing their new gaming product but the brilliantly named Cork based Irish indie label - **Forever In Financial Arrears** - celebrating a century of top tuneage releases with a wonderfully curated compilation of its current roster. From the genteel musings of **Driven Snow** to ex Rollerskate Skinny frontman Ken Griffin's latest musical project, the brilliant *August Wells*, the album is a classic case of all-

killer-no-filler with some recent beauties in its midst. **Cat Dowlings Animals** was a brilliant return and here the title track shines along with the brilliant 'Ancestors' from the Frank And Walters 2020 album *Glass*. **Klubber Langs** 'Make Amends' and **First Class & Coaches** 'Neon Hip' bring the noise while **Trouble Pilgrims** and **Pontius Pilate & The Naildrivers** offer gritty rock n roll and punked up ska respectively. **Silver Owls**, **Gammi Origami**, **One Morning In August** and

**Emperor Of Ice Cream** showcase the shoegaze, dreamy side of the labels roster while **The Love Buzz** are the young, hairy pretenders to the punk pop throne. Since its founding in 2005, the label have prided themselves on their community ethos, their strong working relationships and artistic freedoms. Consistently delivering a top product within these spheres is a cause for celebration in itself so here's to another hundred.

PAUL MCDERMOTT



**MICHAEL LIGHTBORNE - Slí na Fírinne**

In 2009 when 19 turbines were erected on the Boggeragh Mountains in Co. Cork, it was the largest wind farm in Ireland. A field recording of the wishing sound emanating from rotating blades high up on one of its turbines can be heard on 'Boggeragh Wind Farm', the centrepiece of *Slí na Fírinne* (the way of truth) the latest ambient experimental album from Cork-born Michael Lightborne. Previous albums have included 2020's *Ring*

*Ring Road* (recordings of the low-level vibrations pulsing through the concrete pillars holding up Coventry's Ring Road) and 2018's *Sounds of the Projection Box* (documenting the sounds of a cinema projection box, as it moves from 35mm film to digital projection). *Slí na Fírinne* finds Lightborne returning home to Cork's upper Blackwater valley, microphone in hand to capture field recordings of a far more agrarian varie-

ty. Sounds of farmyard milking parlours, the buzz of electric fencing, late-night radio static, dogs barking, the current of a river and bird song are gathered and then manipulated, layered and treated alongside sparse electronica.

In his exploration of Irish rural landscapes and their associated folklore and traditions, he has created a gorgeously hypnotic and at times unsettling album.