

GABI LUNCA: SOUNDS FROM A BYGONE AGE VOL 5 *****

WHERE would we be without such enterprising labels as Asphalt Tango? The new volume in their ongoing Bygone Age series is a corker. Gaby Lunca - the supreme Gypsy diva of Romania's musica lautareasca - may have been locally superseded by meretricious turbo-pop singers, and is now mostly to be heard in Pentecostal churches, but she was once a much-loved daily fixture on radio, as well as a sought-after wedding performer. The tracks here come from the 1960s and 70s, and they work like a drug. Permeated by that wonderfully lazy, limping beat which first endeared Taraf de Haidouks to Western audiences, they showcase her equally wonderful voice, darkly suggestive of all the pleasures of life. Heaven.

Michael Church, The Scotsman, 16 May 2008