

this twelve-song collection wherein Rafael revisits a further quartet of his compositions. By any standard you'd care to construct, nothing need be said regarding *America Come Home* other than it's a classic song and an impassioned plea to his countrymen to make America mighty once again. David Crosby and Graham Nash add harmony vocals to this latest incarnation, which debuted on THE JOEL RAFAEL BAND (1994) as did, *I Can't Feel Your Love* and this album's penultimate selection *Goldmine*. The magnificently melodious *Meanwhile The Rain* hails from Joel's sophomore set OLD WOOD BARN (1996).

Joel (acoustic guitar, vocals) is accompanied throughout AMERICA COME HOME by Jackson Browne band alumni, Mark Goldenberg (electric guitar, B3 organ) and Kevin McCormick (bass), plus long-time Crosby sideman Steve Distanislao (drums) and the fits-like-a-glove vocal tones of Beth Fitchet-Wood. A member of 1970's California rock band Honk, Beth has contributed to albums by Jackson Browne, Jennifer Warnes and Jack Tempchin. In the AMERICA COME HOME cover song department, *Go Tell The Savior*, penned forty years ago by the late, great Jack Hardy, resurfaced on THE FOLK BROTHERS (2008); Jack's collaboration with long-time friend David Massengill. Joel's country tinged reading finds an errant son contemplating an uncertain future: 'And the mornin' just might find me, halfway to hell.' The other cover song *Singing In The Streets* was composed by Jack Tempchin.

The Kerouac connection apart, in 1981 Rafael released an album titled DHARMA BUMS, and a song bearing that title is included here. Goldenberg's electric guitar intro possesses real bite, whilst Rafael's lyric moves on to celebrate human endeavour. An up-tempo delight and fall celebration that anticipates the impending 'freeze,' *Indian Summer*—co-written with David O' Brien—also offers the environmental ideal, '...The water in the river is a mirror of the sky...' Midway through Joel's melancholic *Runaway Girl* the narrator intones, '...We hoped it would work out for the best.' Relative to life, *Within Your Graces*—to all intents a love ode, co-written with Rebecca Unger—and the reflective closing selection *Racing And Chasing The Sun* are each subtly infused with a mystical undercurrent. **Arthur Wood**  
www.joelrafael.com

### Eamon Friel THE STREETS FORGET

Thran Records

★★★★

*Another perceptive collection of relatable life vignettes by Friel*



Born in London 'a few years ago' to Irish parents, Friel has resided in Londonderry since the age of six and these days, is a respected broadcaster on BBC's Radio Ulster and Radio Foyle. This eleven-track album is his sixth solo release, and opens with the event filled childhood recollection *All The Fun Of The Fair*. The narrator's first utterance '...It's where I wanted to be...' sets the scene and, joined by two chums, the trio head for the bright lights of the Daisyfield on the edge of town. By the close, the darkness brought to the fair by an earthbound power failure furnishes the revelations that '...millions of stars...' light the night sky. *Forget The Fandango* is a rousing foot-tapper, whilst the later and inspirational *Jerusalem Today* counsels for the demise of Babylon—Blake's *Jerusalem* was Friel's template. Both songs hail from his musical comedy, The Music Makers which made its world premiere in Londonderry during late 2010.

Featuring the contrary characters Upside Down and Outside In, *On A Lullaby* is precisely what it claims to be on the box. Inspired by the title song lyric, an autumnal street scene graces the front of the liner booklet. Wry intricate wordplay is woven into the seven verses that constitute the humorous *The Man Of Few Words*. Having referenced the beauty of a clear, star-lit night sky in the opening song and autumn days in the title song, *Cygnus The Swan* focuses upon the firmament at the same time of day and year.

In the liner booklet Friel reveals that the encounter which unfolds in *Better The Devil You Know* occurred '...on a hill behind Derry called Sheriff's Mountain...' The seasonal *Again For The First Time* finds the mature in years narrator revelling in childlike innocence at the rediscovery of a natural world that has been once more carpeted in snow. Set in a Reno, Nevada gambling den, the closing selection *Rock And Roll Ballads* is a sly commentary on the harsh realities of the music business and finds a former headlining musician reflecting upon the true cost of fame as well as the slow demise of his

performing career.

Eddie O'Donnell (guitar, mandolin, banjo, piano, organ, whistle) is credited with arranging Friel's songs, and there's additional support throughout THE STREETS FORGET from permutations of Norman Doherty (guitar), Marie Clarke (accordion), Tracey McRory (fiddle), Ciaran O'Donnell (bass), Liam Bradley (drums, percussion), Marc Gallagher (recorder), Seamus O'Kane (bodhran), Percy Robinson (Dobro), Frank D Robinson (saxophone) and The Rathmore Four (backing vocals).

**Arthur Wood**

www.eamonfriel.com

### Kenny Selcer DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME

Touch the  
Sky TTS 1012

★★★★

*A great discovery which I urge you to seek out*



It never ceases to surprise me some of the musical gems that drop through my letterbox quite unexpectedly. This album by Kenny Selcer is a good example. I'll be honest, when I first opened it I hardly took any notice and just placed it amongst the growing pile of CDs to try and listen to one day if time allowed. A few weeks later I was looking for another CD and I took a second look at Kenny's album and decided to have a quick listen to the first track. Just over an hour later the CD finished and I had no hesitation in playing it again, all thoughts about what I was doing or going to do blown out the window as I relaxed with a steaming hot cup of tea and really listened to Kenny Selcer. The songs, all self-penned were slowly insinuating into my mind, the musical accompaniment impressing with its clarity and quality and Kenny's vocals sounding like a long lost friend that I'd not heard from in many a year. Yet until I played this album the first time, I didn't know Kenny Selcer from Adam

I can tell you that these fifteen songs were written over a long period of time, one going back to 1994, a few from some ten years ago and others from 2011. Regardless of when they dated from, there's a continuity that you don't get with most albums these days. The names of the accompanying musicians meant nothing to me, yet the musical arrangements and musicianship is nothing short of inspired. Clean and clear picking,