



Kimmie Rhodes **“Walls Fall Down”** Sunbird Records

Following a couple of compilation releases, including the previously unreleased **“Lost And Found”** collection, and a pair of soundtrack albums containing music Kimmie specially composed for her stage plays – **“Windblown”** and **“Small Town Girl”** – the Lubbock bred Texan is back her first suite of new tunes since **“Love Me Like A Song”** [2002].

The album title cut opens this collection, and at the outset of this cautionary number Rhodes’ lyric touches on religion, ecology and the ‘rise and rise’ of America’s wealth, then she adds *“Somehow we’ve forgotten where we started, We’re way above our heads and wondering why, We missed our exit while the seas were parted, And now we’re travelling inside this paradise.”* Kimmie goes on to reflect that nothing lasts forever, and in time even walls fall down. Next up, underpinned by a loping shuffle beat, there’s one of Townes’ best known works - “If I Needed You” and it’s followed by Rodney Crowell’s “Sex And Gasoline” a stinging condemnation of capitalism, particularly products advertised via sexual content and also ageism [the young vs. the rest] - two rather negative aspects of consumerism. Crowell’s song closes with a layered montage of sound recordings, probably taken for radio, including one that mentions the events of 9/11. Midway through “If I Needed You” there’s an instrumental break that sounds like a hammered dulcimer, but checking the CD liner I’d guess it’s the [glass] armonica [+] credited to Kimmie’s son Gabriel.

Kimmie has toured Ireland on a couple of occasions in recent years and **“Walls Fall Down”** includes songs she composed with County Down [Northern Ireland] bred law graduate turned musician Kieran Goss. “Beautiful” the first of those is a tender ballad dedicated in part to the earthly delights that surround us [the seasons, birds etc.], while later in this collection their “Make The Morning Shine” and the happy-go-lucky themed “Shining Like A Sun” also involved the writing talents of Brendan Murphy [a member of The 4 Of Us]. “I’ve Been Loved By You” is explained by its title, and is followed by “All In All” wherein the narrator, a farmer [?], looks back on his/her life – *“Time plays a trick before our very eyes, She pockets our lives like you’d pocket a dime.”* The third and final cover song in this collection is a ‘slow version’ of the Lennon and McCartney **“Magical Mystery Tour”** era ballad “Fool On The Hill,” c/w tasteful acoustic guitar work. Crowell’s social commentary from earlier in the set is matched by Rhodes’ “Your Majesty,” and I’m probably not a million miles adrift if I ‘guessed’ she was reflecting on the political career of the proprietor/owner of the Prairie Chapel Ranch. While ‘the reign’ is [thankfully] not a permanent one, the legacy will be ‘a hard rain’ for many future generations. A couple of tracks farther on, the desperate and edgy “There’s A Storm Coming” – mostly set in New Orleans - is drawn from the same ‘dark’ lyric well as the title track and “Your Majesty.” Prominently featuring a cello, **“Walls Fall Down”** closes with the Beatlesque sounding “Last Seven Seconds Of The Universe.” Think “A Day In The Life,” but cosmic....and final!

Co-produced by Kimmie and Gabriel [guitar, keyboards], and recorded, mixed and mastered by her husband Joe Gracey, **“Walls Fall Down”** was recorded at their Sunbird Studio outside Austin. The support players include John Gardner [percussion], two of Austin’s finest Glen Fukunaga [bass] and Brian Standefer [cello], plus ‘imported’ vocalists Kieran Goss and Ann Kinsella [ex The Fallen Angels].

#### **Note.**

[+] – The instrument was invented circa 1761 by Benjamin Franklin.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**  
Kerrville Kronikles 02/08.