



Hamilton Camp “**Sweet Joy**” Beachwood Records

“**Sweet Joy**” was produced and arranged by Camp and James Lee Stanley, and released by the latter’s Beachwood Recordings. Camp passed on October 2, 2005, shortly after completing work on this, his final studio recording. Inside the eco-card gatefold liner, below a picture of Hamilton, appear the words *“This collection of songs is dedicated to Rasjadah Joy Camp.”* Camp’s wife, Rasjadah, passed during early 2002 and this tribute collection includes a handful of Camp originals, a pair of co-writes, and covers by Bob Dylan, Jimmy Webb and others. Apart from Camp [classical guitar, harmonica, all vocals] and Stanley [guitar, percussion], the support players were Ken Lyon [bass] and on a couple of cuts Little Feat’s Paul Barrere [slide guitar].

Camp begins with a work that is over 100 years old. Penned by the Irish born poet/dramatist/writer William Butler Yeats, his natural world portrait “Song Of The Wandering Aengus” [the title is misspelled in the album liner as “Angus”] was part of Yeats’ 1899 collection “**The Wind Among The Reeds.**” All poetic lyrical devices apart, in “Long Train” the first Camp original, the narrator confirm that he is prepared to embrace death. Featuring a double-tracked gospel style vocal, “2:19” is subjectively ‘almost’ a train song and was penned by [Bob] Gibson & Camp, a duo that enjoyed considerable popularity back in the early sixties. In truth employing two voices was the only way to perform “2:19.” “Nothin’ But The Blues” prominently features Camp’s harmonica and Barrere’s slide guitar. According to the liner “New Beginning” was penned by Keb Mo and Bobby McFerrin, except that the song which first appeared on Keb’s album “**The Door**” [2000] is actually titled “The Beginning.” That error apart, this hymn like number opens with a familiar and much repeated message, *“When I die, I won’t be gone, I’ll be living in the everlasting, While I’m here, I hope that I can find, The answers to the questions, Life keeps asking, ‘Cause in the end it’s a new beginning.”* Jimmy Webb’s “Highwayman,” takes reincarnation as its focus. While it opens with reference to a mounted robber who was hung *“in the Spring of ‘25,”* there’s also reference to a sailor on a schooner who perished at sea, a now entombed dam builder *“on the wild Colorado”* at Boulder who slipped and fell into wet concrete, and, finally, a well traveled spaceman.

“Sittin’ On A Roof Top” is a tender love song to a dancer - *“You give yourself to the music ‘cause it feels so good, If only I could make music that would make you dance, I surely would.”* Featuring music composed by Camp, “Celts” is composed of Yeats’ 1886 poem “The Stolen Child” [except that the liner titles it “Lost Child”!] followed by Lord Byron’s 1817 poem “Go No More A Rovin’.” “Pride Of Man” previously appeared on Camp’s 1964 album “**Paths Of Victory**” which the Collectors Choice label reissued during 2002 – listen closely to this cut, as forty years on [and for that matter, centuries and millennia on], nothing has changed for mankind – *“Those who put their faith in fire, In fire their faith shall be repaid.”* Brimming with spiritual and saintly references, the final cover song is Bob Dylan’s “Ring Them Bells” which first appeared on “**Oh Mercy**” [1989]. Closing the collection are the album title cut and “Windsong.” The former, penned for his wife, is heartfelt and full of allusions to their life together, while, possibly inspired by Rasjadah’s passing, “Windsong” contemplates a journey [possibly the final?] into the unknown.

I think that quoting one title in error can be excused, but three misprints is wanton carelessness, and does nothing for Hamilton’s reputation. If this disc is ever reprinted, I’d suggest the least that could be done is to make the relevant corrections.

Folkwax Score 6 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 08/06.