



Luka Bloom **"Eleven Songs"** BigSky Records

"Eleven Songs" was co-produced, recorded and mixed by David Odlum [Josh Ritter], former guitarist for The Frames. Odlum mixed **"Tribe,"** Bloom's 2007 release, at his Black Box studio in France. The sessions for **"Eleven Songs"** took place over eight days at Grouse Lodge in County Westmeath, Ireland and the session players included ex-Frames Dave Hingerty [drums], Trevor Hutchinson [double bass], Liam O'Maonlai [piano], Paul Smith [piano], Conor Byrne [flute], Kenneth Edge [soprano sax, clarinet] and Donal's daughter Cora Venus Lunny [violin/viola], plus the Gardiner St. Gospel Choir and backing vocalists Sinead Martin and Luka's son, Robbie Moore. O'Maonlai [ex-Hothouse Flowers] also played harp on one song and sang. Like its predecessor, **"Eleven Songs"** was mixed at Black Box.

Luka grabs the listener at the outset of this collection by way of a guitar riff that is repeated four times – and returns to it throughout the opening "There Is A Time." In terms of subject matter the lyric reflects on the diverse journey of life. Another long established Bloom trademark is that of embracing an oft repeated hook-word within a lyric, and in the case of the second cut "I'm On Your Side" that word is "ye-eah" - with no liner booklet, or song lyrics posted on Bloom's new web site, that's my best guess. Supported by soaring and swooping strings "I Hear Her, Like Lorelei" is a wistful ballad wherein the narrator relates how the memory of a woman [in his past], haunts him in the manner of those mythical River Rhine maidens whose alluring singing enticed sailors to a watery grave. The title "I Love The World I'm In" says it all and masks no deep message – there's mention of "jacarandas" and "cicadas" - while melodically, it's vigorously percussive in a Latin American kind of way.

Gentle and restrained "Sunday" is another love song. It's no great revelation that "Fire" is a four letter word, and the lyric of this energetically paced number similarly embraces that well worn four-letter 'f' word. Subjectively, the lyric mentions a certain ongoing *"stupid"* conflict where *"...we know we were lied to"* and how mankind, blinded by addiction to modern day gadgets and gizmos, has become anaesthetised to the significance of such events – sufficient that, these days no one possesses 'the fire' to protest. "When Your Love Comes" amounts to another self-explanatory title, while "See You Soon," on the other hand, is an optimistic reflection on love that is departing.

Using brushes, Hingerty establishes the rail bound rhythm at the outset of "Eastbound Train," and the narrator [supported by the Gardiner St. Gospel Choir] goes on to contemplate the sights, sounds and smells he will experience while onboard. **"Eleven Songs"** closes with a couple of spiritually inspired numbers. "Everyman" is a gently paced rumination on how, weighed down by personal chattels and failings, we each walk our *"own road, to the end of time,"* while, aided by strings and choir, the ensuing and uplifting "Don't Be Afraid Of The Light That Shines Within You" bears the sonic stamp of a Mike Scott/Waterboys 'Celtic period' creation.

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 10/08.