



Fred Eaglesmith “**Falling Stars And Broken Hearts**” no label

With this disc Fred returns to the self-release route. Relative to the story that prevailed back in the days of Sweetwater Music, Fred currently enjoys sufficient public profile that marketing this disc should equate to handling a light summer breeze. The disc also marks the first appearance, on disc, of Fred's reconfigured road band. After all these years, The Squirrels have flown. Willie P. Bennett [mandolin, harmonica] is the only carry over, and the *new boys* amount to Darcy Yates [bass, keyboards], Roger Marin [guitar, pedal steel], Dan Walsh [guitar, dobro] and *guest player* Craig Bignell [drums, percussion]. Apart from “Ordinary Guy” co-written with Lynn Miles, Eaglesmith penned the remaining dozen cuts, and that headcount includes the hidden track. Two fifths Bruce Springsteen, two fifths Johnny Cash and one fifth *uniquely Eaglesmith*, there are no frills with Fred, just plain old hard livin' and drinkin', lovin' and cheatin', and drivin' songs. Blue collar rock'n'roll, Canadian style. Fred's lyrics eulogise the smell of diesel and cigarette butts, the heartache that comes with the break-up of a relationship, the world viewed from a bar stool, driving a road sweeper/snow plough in “Cumberland County”.....and more. “Cold War” is the track that you can't categorise as typical Eaglesmith, wherein the narrator recalls his early years with snapshots of a world weary father and a mother that eventually left home. The hidden cut, which may be titled “Mary Ann,” relates the tale of a getaway driver living on the edge, who “*ain't going down alone.*”

Finally, a word of warning as the digipak liner indicates that the CD contains enhanced content, and that it would auto-start in any IBM/PC tray type CD-ROM. In my PC it didn't, and totally froze the machine repeatedly. When I finally accessed the enhanced content it simply boiled down to the song lyrics as individual Word files, and a series of photos of the band members. Ho hum.....and somewhat frustrating. Fred, what were you thinking?

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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