

## SONGS FROM IRELAND



*Reviewed by Garry Victor Hill*

*Songs from Ireland. CD released March 2015 Produced by Pat Donne & Damien Leith 15 Songs 55 Minutes. Rating \*\*\*\*\* 85%*

Song List:

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| 1 Black is the Colour (duet with Sharon Corr) | 2 Molly Malone                           |
| 3 Star of the County Down                     | 4 The Parting Glass                      |
| 5 Red is the Rose                             | 6 Galway Girl (Featuring Sharon Shannon) |
| 7 Raglan Road                                 | 8 Rocky Road to Dublin                   |
| 9 Song For Ireland                            | 10 Danny Boy                             |
| 11 Wild Colonial Boy                          | 12 Black Velvet Band                     |
| 13 Bright Blue Rose (featuring Aine Coe)      | 14 Carrickfergus                         |
| 15 Galway Bay (featuring Bing Crosby)         |  |

Damien Leith was born in Dublin in 1976 and spent much of his youth in Ireland, particularly County Kildare, but he also spent time in Africa as his father's work meant they frequently lived there. In 2006 he won the *Australian Idol* television

competition and took out Australian citizenship soon after. That was Eire's loss and our gain, for since then he has put out six albums in various genres. *Songs From Ireland* is his seventh and as the title suggests, this focuses on traditional Irish songs, or songs coming out of that tradition.

He sings with a pleasing, well moderated voice and with expression under control. He avoids the pitfalls that so many singing Irish songs fall into. One of the most common is to be maudlin, another is to be overly expressive. A third problem is to give tired recitals of songs the singers have known since childhood, as if the listeners are meant to endure a tour through a vocal museum of Ireland's past.

*Songs from Ireland* works as a living collection. Leith was wise to record it in Dublin with a producer who also serves as one of the musicians. He was also wise to bring in featured musicians and singers for duets. Sharon Corr is perfect on 'Black is the Colour' and the remastered duet with the long dead Bing Crosby on his famous half a century past plus 'Galway Bay' was risky, but it works.

Any criticisms? Well a few little known or even unknown tracks within the collection would have been good. For those who already know of traditional Irish songs no surprises come, but for those new to the genre it would be hard to imagine an introduction more likely to win listeners over.

