



ter at a ren faire than in a recording studio. The harmonic balance is badly off—you can barely hear the melody in the chorus. The next two Irish tunes, "Whiskey in the Jar" and "I'll Tell My Ma," fare much better.

"Run Come See," written in 1951 by calypso singer Blake Higgs, tells the story of the 1929 hurricane that caught the Bahamas unaware and destroyed many ships. The *Crimson Pirates* give the song a suitably Caribbean rhythm and flavor.

There are a number of silly songs, including "Toad Fish," "Land Rover" (a folk version of the traditional Irish song "Wild Rover"), and the newly composed "Pirate Alphabet." All of these are undoubtedly more effective in live performance.

"Distant Drum" is the most restrained and intriguing song in this collection. It starts with percussion and whistle and moves into a poignant lament about waiting for a loved one who never returns. Other highlights are "Rowdy Soul," with its interesting percussion and Karen O'Hara's raw-and-rowdy singing, and the rousing pirate song "Bow to Stern." In the latter, singer Robin O'Driscoll proves herself to be a strong singing storyteller with commendably clear diction. It's a treat to be able to understand every word.

As Abraham Lincoln once said of a book, "People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like." This isn't necessarily damning with faint praise; people who are fond of pirates and who enjoy rollicking music at renaissance faires will want to check out *Come Be a Pirate*.

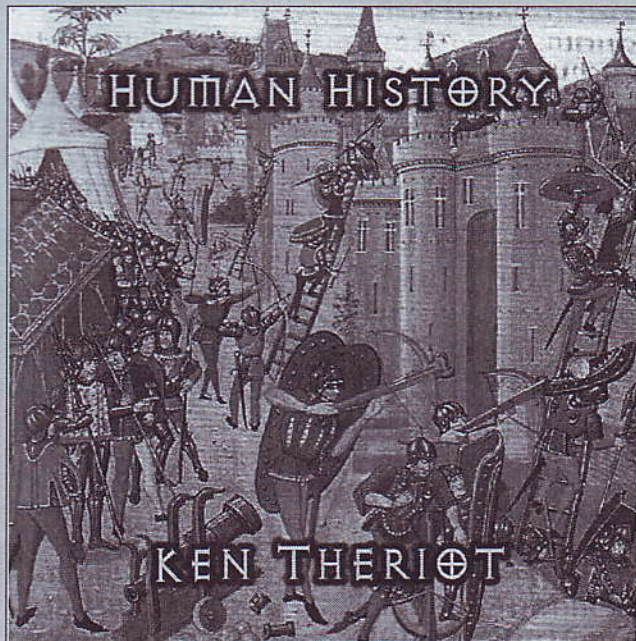
—Elaine Cunningham

KEN THERIOT

Human History
Raven Boy Music / 2008

According to his website, Ken Theriot makes "Folk Music for the Current Middle Ages" targeted toward members of the Society for Creative Anachronism. His newest CD, *Human History*, is a fun, intelligent, historical-minded collection.

It's not easy to make history accessible musically. Ken manages this nearly insurmountable task by making the lyrics easily understood and the tunes catchy, while his playing supports the voices, not supplants them. This is campfire music, meant for a



real person to play and sing without benefit of DJ equipment or mixing software. By including liner notes that briefly capture the general history involved in each song, he sets the stage for the listener, and his clear, easy-to-follow singing voice finishes the experience. Songs are just as long as they need to be without falling into "noodling" (when it feels like the artist got distracted by a cool chord and forgot he was recording). I also liked that the songs have a distinct "faire" sound, especially with the bagpipes that show up on "The Minstrel Boy."

The album leads off strongly with "Band of Brothers," which is very closely adapted from the "St. Crispin Day" speech from Shakespeare's *Henry V*. I still get chills when I watch Kenneth Branagh's stirring performance in that scene, and the speech itself has been famously used in popular movies for years. To hear the speech set to music in a style that can actually be sung is simply amazing. If there isn't some local SCA group out there somewhere singing this before trundling into the field at Gulf Wars or Pennsic, there needs to be.

Anybody who's ever attended a historically-inspired feast will get behind "Feast Song" and its list of luridly stomach-curdling horrors, every one a true story. When I realized that Ken is in the SCA, I admit I was very

much hoping there'd be some just-for-fun songs, and this one qualifies in spades.

People who go to conventions or renaissance festivals will love this album. I wish I'd known about his work much earlier. I may not be able to sit across from him at some bardic circle around a fire, but I think I'll do the next best thing and take the CD camping with me next time I go.

—Cas O'Connor

LONE RAVEN

Bridges of Time
Lone Raven Music
<http://www.loneraven.com>

Cool, autumn winds blow in from the crimson, mahogany, and ancient ivory-yellow dotted heartland. The sound of tribal rhythms whisper across the painted forests. At first, the tones are barely audible, then growing more potent with every passing moment, reaching the crescendo. A sound that flows with multi-textured layers, fiddle, guitar, piano, Uilleann pipes, rolling over the hills like a Bardic troupe on parade.

