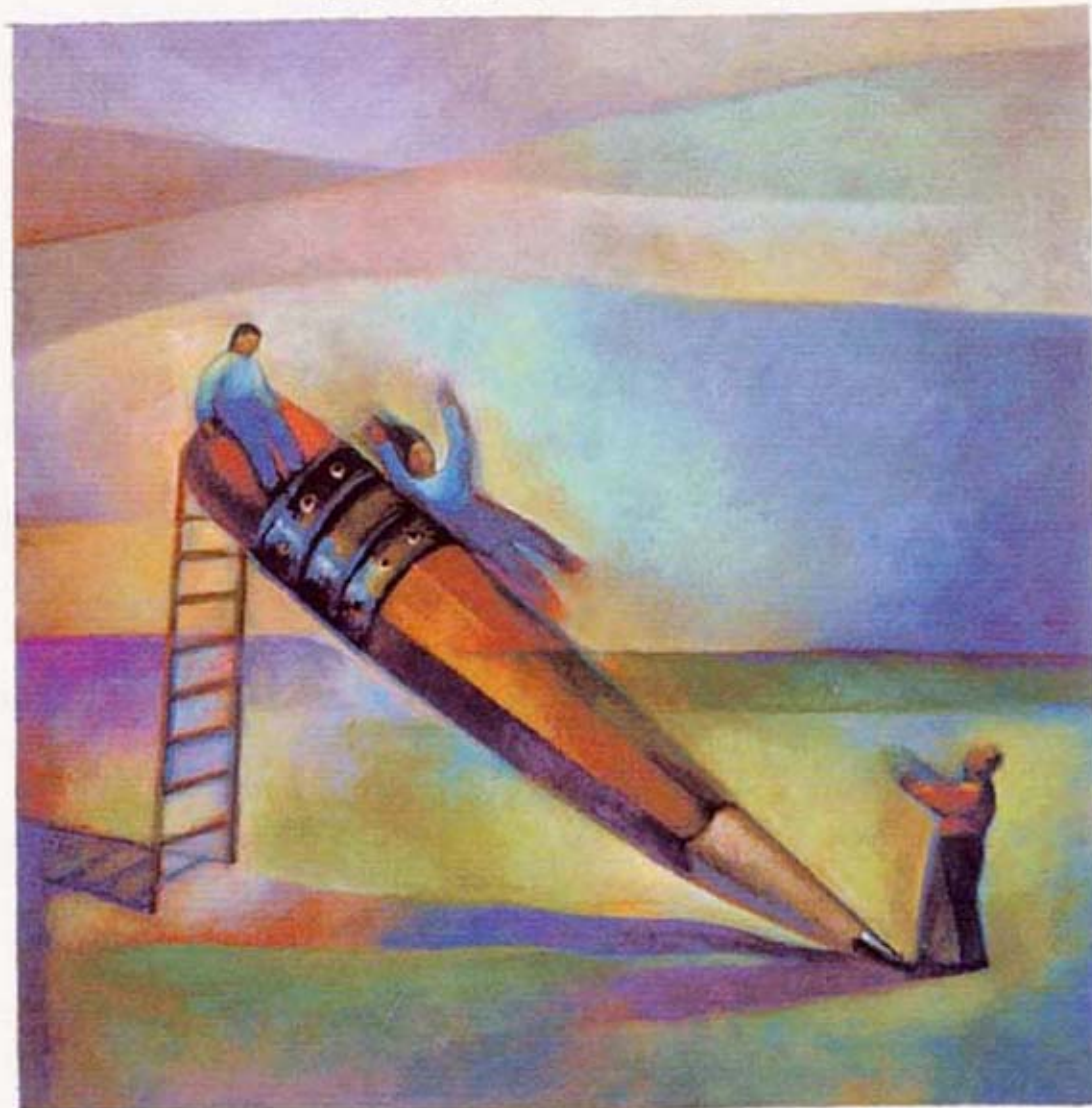


C e i l i R a i n



E r a s e r s O n P e n c i l s

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CEILI RAIN

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CEILI RAIN BIOGRAPHY

With the exception of two miserable days as an electrician's assistant, Bob Halligan, Jr. has never held a "day job" in his life. The lead singer, songwriter, guitarist and creative force behind the Celtic-flavored rock band **Ceili (KAY-lee) Rain** has earned his living—and reputation—as a working musician and songwriter for most of his life. Halligan has parlayed that well-deserved acclaim as a writer into a recording career that has seen the release of three highly praised albums for Ceili Rain, the most recent being the Cross Driven (Provident distribution) release, *Erasers On Pencils*.

Erasers On Pencils is the latest celebrated chapter in a career that has found the Nashville-based band continuing to assert itself on both national and international stages. The album once again finds Halligan utilizing his gift for taking universal themes and distilling their essence into a lyrical approach that is capable of touching an audience on a very personal level. The opener, "Jigorous," for example, tells the story of an aging woman reveling in life again at the sound of a familiar melody; "The Fighting Chair" uses a fishing analogy to encourage the listener to live life to its fullest; "God Done Good" finds Halligan overcome with thanksgiving for his wife and adopted son.

"I have no problem laying bare such personal stories," Halligan asserts. "What else have I got as a songwriter to offer but myself? I find that the things that really get to me are the things that get to others." Indeed, Halligan has a knack for taking the big ideas and reducing them to their deepest, most emotional roots. That's a perfect description of the album's closer, "Junkyard," which Halligan explains is "pivotal to the album's personality. It's about the having a righteous indignation towards evil. We live in a 'garbage in-garbage out' world, where television, movies, magazines—even pop music—constantly confront us with an unwholesome barrage of images. It's my reaction to how we as a society have allowed these things to infiltrate our lives."

A native of Syracuse, New York, Halligan got his first break in 1982, when heavy metal band Judas Priest cut one of his tunes. He subsequently pitched a second track to Judas Priest, the ominously titled "Some Heads Are Gonna Roll," and when that song became a smash, Halligan's career as a writer-for-hire swung into high gear. "For years, songwriting has been my bread and butter," says Halligan, whose tunes for Michael Bolton, Cher, Joan Jett, Kathy Mattea and others helped him build an impressive résumé. His songwriting portfolio now boasts tracks on albums and singles that have totaled some 30 million sales worldwide.

But for the past several years, says Halligan, his passion has been Ceili Rain. "I went through a period of bitterness when my first crack at a solo artist career didn't materialize a decade ago. At that time, my wife Linda had become infatuated with Celtic music. She had that playing around our house quite a bit and I fell in love with it." Halligan sheepishly admits that when Linda proposed the idea of blending Celtic music influences with classic rock and pop music, "I said 'that's the dumbest idea I ever heard.' But I tried it, and I have never been the same since."

Bio, p. 2

Ceili Rain is a departure from many things, among them, the ordinary. The seven-piece ensemble melds hard-driving rock guitar licks with traditional Celtic sounds and instruments such as button accordion, tin whistle, fiddle and bagpipes. Ceili Rain makes music that is, as Halligan puts it, "Celtic music for a pop/rock palate. Imagine The Chieftains and The Beatles locked in a room together, with John and Paul getting the upper hand musically."

The 1997 release of *Say*—“*KAY-lee*” launched the band’s recording career. That disc was described in *Billboard* magazine as “an intriguing musical tapestry...fresh and innovative...it captures the charm of its live shows.” Material from the CD yielded hits for country star Kathy Mattea (“Love Travels”), Irish vocalist Marie Brennan (“Peace Has Broken Out”) and contemporary Christian singers Eli (“That’s All the Lumber You Sent”) and Rebecca St. James (“You Then Me Then You Then Me”).

The band also developed several signature tunes of its own off of its debut, among them “Long Black Cadillac” (a hypothetical account of that long, last ride in a hearse), that Halligan is known to introduce from stage as “a little song about death.” That’s not to be confused with the album’s closing track, “666 Degrees,” which Halligan often describes as “a little ditty about Hell.”

“But there’s a lighter side to Ceili Rain,” Halligan insists, with a chuckle. “Even our spiritual songs are not heavy-handed. They’re not religious in a ‘born again,’ in-your-face way. The worst feeling you can give someone is that they’re being preached at. We let the songs do the talking. There is spiritual content if you care to hear it but we don’t shove it down people’s throats.”

Take “That’s All the Lumber You Sent,” which Halligan co-wrote with his wife Linda and fellow musician and pal Rick Cua. “To me, it’s about that ultimate balance sheet at the end of one’s life, but it’s actually about accountability in any situation.” Likewise, “I Don’t Need A Picture” can apply to any significant, personal relationship. “The most important thing about Ceili Rain,” says Halligan, “is that our music celebrates life.”

The band followed its debut with the 1999 release of *We’re Makin’ a Party*, which contained concert versions of many Ceili Rain staples, as well as the previously unreleased live favorite “Stomp.” Initially a self-released project, *Erasers On Pencils* made its way into the hands of Cross Driven Records’ general manager Glenn Wagner in the fall of 2000 and has been enjoying worldwide distribution for several months.

Over the past six years, Ceili Rain has become one of the most critically acclaimed bands to emerge out of Nashville. Ceili’s current lineup—a group that Kathy Mattea affectionately describes as “a six-headed musical joy-monster” is comprised of Halligan; lead guitarist Raymond Arias; three time, all Ireland button accordion champion Buddy Connolly; bass player Daniel Grimsland; drummer Bill Bleistine; and tin whistle/bagpipe player Skip Cleavinger.

Halligan—like the fans and critics who continue to embrace him—has high hopes for Ceili Rain. “This music strikes a deep chord in people, because it derives from a collective yearning people have for God, for spirituality, for home, for togetherness. These songs are written to be inclusive and inviting—*anyone* who wants some joy out of life is apt to like them. We are not here to serve a particular group of people. The joy, laughter and sense of fellowship that’s felt at our shows is geared to *everyone*—all are welcome in this place.”

###

Ceili Rain “Factoids”

- **Bob Halligan, Jr.** first began writing Celtic inspired pop/rock songs in 1989, after hearing a traditional Irish CD and falling in love with the haunting sounds of the bagpipes, tin whistle, button accordion and fiddle.
- Cross Driven Records released **Ceili Rain’s** newest CD, *Erasers On Pencils*, in November 2000. It features the hits “God Done Good,” “Jigorous,” “Junkyard” and nine other tracks written or co-written by Halligan.
- A native of Syracuse, New York, Halligan moved to Nashville in 1995 and formed Ceili Rain. The band released its self-titled debut in 1997. That disc features tracks made hits by Kathy Mattea (“Love Travels”), Irish vocalist Marie Brennan (“Peace Has Broken Out”) and contemporary Christian singers Eli (“That’s All the Lumber You Sent”) and Rebecca St. James (“You Then Me Then You Then Me”).
- The seven-member band is comprised of lead singer, songwriter and acoustic guitarist Bob Halligan, Jr.; 3-time, All-Ireland button accordion champion Buddy Connolly; lead guitarist Raymond Arias; fiddle player Gretchen Priest; tin whistle/bagpipe player Skip Cleavinger; bass player Bob “Buff” Harmon and drummer Chris Eddy (son of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame-r Duane Eddy).
- Ceili Rain is a “family friendly” band that appeals to audiences ranging from ages 3 to 93. Its unique sound and soulful lyrics have gained the attention and affection of critics and fans around the world. One of Ceili Rain’s biggest concerts to date was the August 2000 World Youth Day event before an audience of 30,000, in Rome.
- Halligan’s musical career began as a critically acclaimed songwriter for both general market and Christian market artists.
- His songs, as recorded by both Christian and mainstream artists, often present Biblical truths disguised as parables, allowing the audience to bring their own life experiences to the interpretation.
- Halligan’s song credits include over 20 hits by artists including Michael Bolton, Cher, Joan Jett, Kathy Mattea and others, in addition to a catalog of well over 100 songs cut by a variety of artists. His songwriting portfolio now boasts tracks on albums and singles that have totaled some 30 million sales worldwide.
- Describing the heartbeat of the band, Halligan says, “This music strikes a deep chord in people, because it derives from a collective yearning people have for God, for spirituality, for home, for togetherness. These songs are written to be inclusive and inviting – *anyone* who wants some joy out of life is apt to like them.”
- Bob lives with his wife Linda and son Liam in Franklin, Tennessee, just south of Nashville.

Bob Halligan, Jr.

Partial list of Songwriter Hits

(* Denotes Gold or Platinum certification)

Contemporary Christian market

| <u>Song:</u> | <u>Artist:</u> | <u>Year:</u> |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| First, Last and Always | Bob Carlisle | 2000 |
| Peace Has Broken Out | Marie Brennan | 2000 |
| That's All the Lumber You Sent | Eli | 1998 |
| I Don't Need a Picture | Considering Lily | 1997 |
| Got The Joy | Sierra | 1997 |
| You Then Me Then You Then Me (from Grammy nominated album) | Rebecca St. James | 1996 |
| Giving You The Rest of My Life | Bob Carlisle | 1994 |
| I Come Out Fighting | Geoff Moore and the Distance | 1990 |
| I Can I Will | Rick Cua | 1989 |
| Young Boy Young Girl | Rick Cua | 1989 |
| Don't Say Suicide | Rick Cua | 1985 |

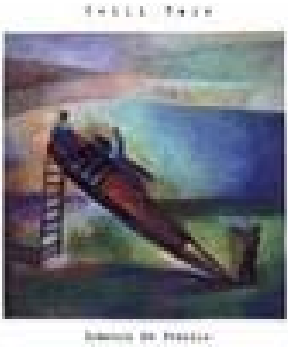
Mainstream market

| <u>Song:</u> | <u>Artist:</u> | <u>Year:</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Love Travels (title track) | Kathy Mattea | 1997 |
| Could've Been You | Cher* | 1992 |
| The Way You Love Me | Rik Emmett (Canada)* | 1990 |
| Midnight Mirage | Jennifer Rush (Germany)* | 1989/90 |
| Rise To It | Kiss* | 1989/90 |
| Still In Love With You | Cher* | 1989/90 |
| Read My Body | Kiss* | 1989/90 |
| Forever Eyes | Michael Bolton | 1989/90 |
| Gina | Michael Bolton* | 1987 |
| Outlaw | Joan Jett | 1987 |
| Make Rick Not War | Blue Oyster Cult | 1986 |
| Some Heads Are Gonna Roll | Judas Priest* | 1984 |
| Rock You | Helix (Canada)* | 1984 |
| Take These Chains | Judas Priest* | 1982 |

Motion Picture Soundtrack cuts:

| <u>Song:</u> | <u>Film:</u> | <u>Year:</u> |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Cold Chills | Wayne's World | 1992 |
| This Means War | Light of Day | 1987 |
| This Raging Fire | Iron Eagle | 1986 |

Plus 102 other cuts, including five contemporary Christian #1 rock songs, among them the 1989 Rock Song of the Year



Ceili Rain

Erasers on Pencils

Tis an indisputable fact that Bob Halligan's lyrics are full of whimsical wisdom, and Ceili Rain's music, as a whole, is infectious with the joy of life well lived. *Erasers on Pencils* is no exception, a feast that's all about goodness.

Take, for example, the invigorating project opener, "Jigorous," that encourages the listener to jump right in the "swirling, whirling, twirl of life that's all around us." "God Done Good" and "Thanks" tell Halligan's own life stories, his gratitude to his wife and to God for the adoption of his son. The title cut, "These Things Have a Way of Workin' Out," "Tween the Jigs & the Reels" and "Life Is a Polka" all form a circle around the idea that even when life is hard, life, and the giver of it, are still good. *Erasers on Pencils* is a buffet of food-for-not-too-serious-thought wrapped up in a big box of musical happiness. Tin whistles, fiddles, bagpipes and accordions—one suspects that Halligan wouldn't mind if someone brought a kazoo and played along!

--Melissa Riddle



Ceili Rain / *Erasers On Pencils*

(Cross Driven Records)

According to the band's Web site, "Ceili" (pronounced KAY-lee) is a Gaelic word for "a party with live music and dancing," and "Rain" represents the good things showered down on us from the heavens above. It's an appropriate name, because **Erasers On Pencils** is a party for your ears and a blessing from above.

Ceili Rain is an undeniably Irish band, but it's not purely Irish. They're like The Beatles with a Celtic influence, with maybe a bit of Grateful Dead thrown in. There are many Celtic bands out there working hard to remain faithful to the sound and traditions of their heritage. But Ceili Rain offers a nice twist—rather than a Celtic band trying to rock, they're a rock band with a Celtic flavor. They capture this blend brilliantly thanks to some classic-pop/rock savvy and smart songwriting. The band's front man, Bob Halligan Jr., has written a lot of well-known songs for artists such as Eli, Bob Carlisle, Rebecca St. James, Cher, Judas Priest, and Michael Bolton. His songwriting is instantly catchy with thought-provoking lyrics. He's got to be one of Christian music's best-kept secrets. And the musicianship! Solid all the way around. There are numerous instruments—including drums, accordion, guitars, bass, fiddles, and bagpipes—and instrumentalists, and it's difficult to single out any one because they're all so good.

Bob is a great lead vocalist, often reminding me of John Lennon—especially on the song "Long For You," which makes a simple but effective case for the existence of God. "Junkyard" is a passionate rocker about shunning the temptations and ugly things of this world. It, too, shows a strong Lennon influence. The title track is actually a Latin number (yes, Latin), and it provides a nice illustration about forgiveness. "God Done Good," a song about God's faithful answers to prayers, is a great rocker flavored with Highland pipes, flutes, fiddles and a little bit of Rebecca St. James near the end. For straight-up Irish music, there's "Jigorous" and "Tween the Jigs & the Reels." And you can guess what kind of music is featured in "Life Is a Polka." Clearly, this is a very diverse band that knows how to have fun while remaining thought provoking and spiritual.

We need more Christian artists like this, creating refreshing and original Christian music without resorting clichéd lyrics or the latest musical trends. Not all the songs are "distinctly Christian," but that's part of the charm. It is, after all, possible to tell a story and express a Christian truth without even mentioning Jesus or God directly. Some might call such stories parables. If I'd received this album before the end of last year, I would have included it on my year-end Best Of list. I love this album and hope you'll seek it out.

--Russ Breimeier



Ceili Rain / Erasers On Pencils

Ceili Rain is a perfect example of the kind of unique sounds and artistry I'd like to see more of in Christian Music. Far too often, new artists are forced into being a Christian copy of some hot secular sound, instead of just being themselves, or trying new and different things. We're following the trends of secular music too much. I wish there would be more artists who push the boundaries, try new combinations of sounds, and just plain do new kinds of things. These kinds of artists are few and far between, unfortunately. But Ceili Rain (KAY-lee) definitely falls into this category.

Led by veteran songwriter Bob Halligan, Jr. (who wrote Eli's radio hit "The Lumber Song," among dozens of other hits), Ceili Rain plays a style of music that I suppose would be best described as 'Celtic rock.' Their sound features modern rock grooves played with guitars, keyboard, and drums, but also with atypical instruments like accordion, violin, tin whistle, bagpipes, flute, and more. The sound is one of a kind, to say the least. They like to use big, anthemic, Celtic sounds and then take these big, extended instrumental breaks where the band just rages on for a few minutes and you don't want them to stop. The closest artist I can think of to compare Ceili Rain to would be Iona, but where Iona is ambient and moody, Ceili Rain is more high energy and celebratory.

But Ceili Rain doesn't stop there. Aside from using traditional modern rock kinds of songs, you'll also find an Irish jig (the opening track, "Jigorous"), Latin influences (the fun title track), and even a Polka ("Life is a Polka"). (Don't worry, even the Polka song somehow works.) Halligan and company seem to relish in trying new and unexpected things. Lyrically, Halligan (who writes all the band's songs) offers tributes to God and family, and challenges the listener at every turn, once again defying expectations. They touch upon the struggles in life, on how we all make mistakes, and remind the listener of the hope and forgiveness to be found in God. Halligan has a talent for taking big ideas and reducing them to their deepest, most emotional, roots. For example, his clever lyrics in "Barely Stay Inside My Own Skin" proclaim the joy one feels when they've just become reborn in Christ.

Top Picks: "God Done Good," "The Fighting Chair," "Erasers on Pencils," "Barely Stay Inside of My Own Skin," and "These Things Have A Way of Workin' Out."

Pros: Lyrics that provoke strong emotions. Celtic rock music played with an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink abandon. It all adds up to a high energy, celebratory kind of experience, that is an absolute *blast*.

Cons: None.

The Verdict: Perfectly proves my point that if Christian Music wasn't trying so hard to be just like what's on the Top 40 radio stations, it could truly be breaking new ground and setting the standard for everyone else to follow. Give this one a try. It's unlike anything you've ever heard before, and it's great fun.

--Robin Parrish



A truly superior musical experience!



Ceili Rain - *Erasers on Pencils*

by *Matthew Turner*

Ceili Rain is a unique band that has its own blend of traditional and contemporary Celtic music. Its CD, *Erasers on Pencils*, shows this blend in mix of songs that takes you from sheer joy to deep contemplation. It makes you FEEL life, not just live it; experience God, not just believe in Him.

It is not just the musical aspect that achieves this, but the lyrics as well. The songs, in true Celtic fashion, are deeper than first hearing or reading the words can reveal. The song, "Jigorous" is a prime example of this. It is a song that, at first, seems to be a frivolous musical piece meant to just make you happy, and then you begin to really hear the words. It is about a mother suffering from an illness that is robbing her of her memory, but not of her ability to love her family and to live with the joy of heaven. It is about loving and caring and enjoying each moment God gives us with those we love.

The main writer for this CD is Bob Halligan Jr, and he touches the soul by being willing to reveal his own soul's struggles and victories. This is particularly obvious in the songs, "God Done Good" and the title track from the CD, "Erasers on Pencils." He is not afraid to get personal with his lyrics, and this allows you as the listener to "get personal" with the music.

The last track on the CD leaves you with a message that cannot and must not be ignored by anyone. That song, "Junkyard," reminds us that we--our souls, hearts and minds--are not junkyards, but Holy Ground. We are the temples of God's Holy Spirit and we need to take care what we allow in that temple.

There is a quote that says "God gave us Music that we might pray without words..."

Ceili Rain is evidence of that.



Ceili Rain: *Erasers On Pencils*

Every once in a while a great Irish Celtic-rock band comes along-- the '80s brought us bands like The Pogues and The Proclaimers, while the '90s brought us greats such as Solas, Altan, and the newest and greatest Celtic-rock sensation, seven-piece **Ceili Rain**.



When implementing such traditional Celtic instruments such as uilleann pipes, tin whistle, flute and highland pipes, it's a challenge not to sound like too much of a novelty. Ceili Rain pulls it off with a balanced modern pop sensibility that keeps you loosely anchored to your familiar pop music landmarks, allowing you to drift off the path just enough to satisfy your hidden international music cravings.

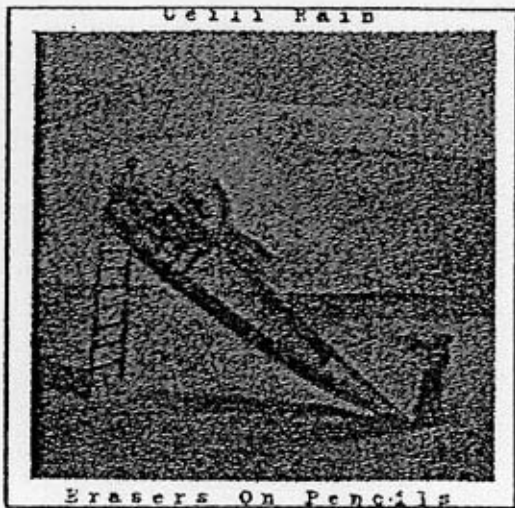
Passionate lyrics sing intelligently of band founder Bob Halligan's life experiences on songs such as *God Done Good*, and *These Things Have A Way Of Workin' Out*. Halligan's inspirational writing adds a perfect touch to the already moving music of Ceili Rain. *Erasers On Pencils* belongs in every music lover's collection.

--Kirby Trapolino

ALBUM SPOTLIGHT

Ceili Rain, *Erasers On Pencils* (Cross Driven Records)

Ceili Rain is one of the most unique bands to emerge from Nashville in some time. The group can best be described as Celtic pop/rock, complete with accordion, bagpipes, tin whistle, and fiddle. Lyrically the band is sustained by hit tunesmith Bob Halligan, Jr.,



who has had cuts by Judas Priest,, Cher, Michael Bolton, and Kathy Mattea. Halligan's songs deal with life issues such as aging (as in "Jigorous," which describes an old woman reveling in life again at a family dance) and coming to terms with mistakes (as the title cut states "that's what erasers on pencils are for"). "The Fighting Chair" is one of

the best cuts on the album as Halligan uses a fishing analogy to encourage the listeners to stop standing on the shore line, get on the boat, strap themselves into the fighting chair and start trying to reel in a big one. Halligan's songs provide a soundtrack for mankind's journey, and prove once again the power of music to uplift and encourage. — Deborah Evans Price