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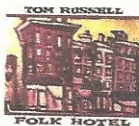
TAKE 245 | OCTOBER 2017

TOM RUSSELL Folk Hotel

FRONTERA

7/10

*Mythical America explored by
brilliant Americana songwriter*



Russell's fascination with outlaw American folklore has seen him write superb albums steeped in Cormac McCarthy border warfare and others dedicated to Beat culture. *Folk Hotel* takes from both, with folk-tinged songs about cowboys, Texas, Irish poets and JFK. "Up In The Old Hotel" is a ballad about the Chelsea Hotel, while "Rise Again, Handsome Johnny" is a murder ballad about JFK sung with a Cash-like sense of good and evil. On *Folk Hotel*, the historical reverence and literary references can sometimes slip towards sentimentality, but at his best – "Harlan Clancy" or "The Last Time I Saw Hank" – Russell is a riveting storyteller.

PETER WATTS