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JOEL RAFAEL'S NEW ALBUM *THIRTEEN STORIES HIGH* IS DUE OUT ON INSIDE RECORDINGS ON APRIL 8, 2008 – THE LEAD SINGLE, "THIS IS MY COUNTRY," AN INSTANT-CLASSIC PROTEST SONG, FEATURES BACKING VOCALS FROM DAVID CROSBY & GRAHAM NASH

Los Angeles, CA, March X, 2008: On **April 8**, Southern California-based singer-songwriter **Joel Rafael** will release **THIRTEEN STORIES HIGH**, his first album of original material since 2000's acclaimed **Hopper**. The disc comes out on **Inside Recordings**, the independent label founded by **Jackson Browne** and his management team; distribution is through **ADA**. It follows up **Rafael's** two renowned albums saluting the songs of **Woody Guthrie**, of whose music he's considered a natural and pre-eminent interpreter. **Joel Rafael** is also the recipient of the **Kerrville Folk Festival's** 1995 "New Folk Emerging Songwriter Award."

Blending troubadourial eloquence, timeless folk and timely political observations, **THIRTEEN STORIES HIGH** opens with its lead single, the forthright and simply-worded protest song "**This Is My Country**," with backing vocals from **Rafael's** friends **David Crosby** and **Graham Nash**. "I wish I had written this song," says **Nash**, adding, "it's so powerful and profound...a call from his heart to ours."

Throughout, the album is driven by this directness. It's also colored by **Rafael's** plain-spoken delivery—as gentle as it is affecting—and wry, understated way with a moving lyric. In a recent piece on **Rafael**, screenwriter **Bob Krakower** described his singing style as, "a voice that sounds like a cross between Mercy and Vengeance," continuing, "he walks and talks as if he came off the pages of a 1930's Steinbeck novel...his is as authentic as any American voice you have heard in a very long time."

That authenticity informs **Rafael** originals including the homespun yet elegant philosophical gem "**Time Stands Still**," the resonant "**Song Of Socrates**" (inspired by the film *The Peaceful Warrior*) and "**Reluctant Angel**," a meditation on sharing one's gifts with the world. Highlights also include "**Promised Land**," which he calls a, "to hell and back song," the free-spirited folk ballad "**Wild Honey**" and "**Missing Pages**," whose theme of resistance to fear-mongering echoes the album's social justice message.

Two of the thirteen tracks are covers of other songwriters' work – "**Rich Man's War**" first saw the light of day on **Steve Earle's** 2004 album *The Revolution Starts Now*. "Thematically," says **Rafael**, "it was perfect for this record." "**I Ought To Know**" is by longtime friend **Jack Hardy**, one of the forces behind the historic *Fast Folk* series (now in the **Smithsonian**). When he first heard **Hardy** perform it at the **Woody Guthrie Folk Festival**, **Rafael** says, "I was knocked out by it and knew I wanted to record it."

Rafael has performed at that same **Festival** since its 1998 inception in **Guthrie's** hometown of **Okemah, OK**, and will be a featured performer when it takes place there this year from **July 9** through **13**. Long renowned for his fluid interpretations of the legendary artist's music, **Rafael** is also a member of the national touring cast of the famed **Woody Guthrie** revue *Ribbon Of Highway, Endless Skyway*.

Rafael's recorded tributes to **Guthrie**, also out on **Inside**, are **Woodeye** ('02) and **Woodyboye** ('05), **The Songs of Woody Guthrie, Volume 1** and **Volume 2**, respectively. Together, they present **Rafael's** elemental takes on twenty-four **Guthrie**—and two **Guthrie**-inspired—compositions. Five feature music **Rafael** created for previously unpublished **Woody Guthrie** lyrics, given to him by **Nora Guthrie**, who directs the **Woody Guthrie Archives** and oversees her father's legacy. **Woodeye** and **Woodyboye**, which contain guest appearances by **Artho Guthrie**, **Jackson Browne**, **Jennifer Warnes** and **Van Dyke Parks**, will be available in special bundled packages with **THIRTEEN STORIES HIGH** (and individually).

In addition to festivals and *Ribbon Of Highway, Endless Skyway* engagements, **Joel Rafael** plans to perform select concert dates in support of **THIRTEEN STORIES HIGH**.

For more information, log on to www.joelrafael.com

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