

# EMERALD RAE *IF ONLY I COULD FLY*

1. **If Only I Could Fly** 2:57
2. **Sweet Arrest** 3:09
3. **Fire Fly** 3:10
4. **Go Dig My Grave** 2:54
5. **Mountain Chant** 3:32
6. **The Marauder** 3:37
7. **Summer Time Will Come** 2:41
8. **Nameless** 2:51
9. **Sugar Baby (trad song)** 3:20
10. **Truly Understand (trad lyrics)** 3:51
11. **Moon Dance** 3:48
12. **The Way That I Am Now** 2:42



There are a lot of new sounds on the debut album, *If Only I Could Fly*, from Boston roots musician **Emerald Rae**. The first sound you hear is the deep buzzing drones of the ancient medieval Welsh fiddle the *crwth* (pronounced “krooth”). An unusual instrument playing by only a small number of people today, Emerald came upon the instrument during her studies of early Scottish traditional music. Another new sound found on the album is Emerald’s active blending of new world Americana with old world Celtic influences. This starts with the drones of the *crwth*, which helped her bring her music full circle back home to America’s Southern mountains. This could be a new iteration of the old path that brought Scots-Irish music to Appalachia in the first place, or it could be that some trace of that path still remains, inspiring young musicians even today. *If Only I Could Fly* also introduces a new identity for this young artist who’s known as a masterful fiddler – singer/songwriter. On this album, Emerald Rae debuts her singing and songwriting, with original songs like the rough-and-tumble “Sweet Arrest” and the percussive, fiddle-driven “Summer Time Will Come.” The new album is a big identity shift for Emerald, but she feels it’s liberating. It’s a chance for her to bring her eclectic tastes in other music into her traditional background. Her inspiration for the creation of this album included such wide-ranging artists as Scottish singer Karine Polwart, Americana master Gillian Welch and even early Willie Nelson!

If you’re wondering how Emerald got to be such a powerhouse fiddler (check out her tune “Fire Fly” for proof of this), it helps to have hard-rocking parents. Growing up

with mom and dad in a country-rock band, Emerald had a taste for the stage from a small age. Born in the sleepy seaside town of Gloucester (America’s oldest seaport), Emerald took to the streets of Boston as a fiddler at a young age, entranced by the hard-driving rhythms of Cape Breton’s Scottish traditions. Annually she followed the traditional path back to Cape Breton Island that so many other Bostonians had traveled before her. At 18, she took home the grand prize at the US Scottish Fiddle Championships! As her studies in Scottish music deepened, she moved to Glasgow to study musicology, but it was her time at the Berklee College of Music that connected to her new worlds of fiddling. Collaborating with fellow fiddlers Flynn Cohen, Liz Simmons and Mariel Vandersteel in the popular folk group Annalivia, Emerald toured also with the Cathie Ryan Band. Over time, Emerald made a name for herself as a solo fiddler totally adept not only in Cape Breton and Scottish traditions, but in Irish and old-time as well. All of these influences are heard on her new album, *If Only I Could Fly*.

We’ve become used to young artists with virtuosic musical powers, but it’s still rare to find young artists with great talent and wide-ranging tastes. Not content to stay in one tradition, Emerald Rae moved across the spectrum, absorbing tunes and rhythms from across the Celtic lands, and ultimately returning home to America. Not content to remain just a fiddler, she’s expanded to become a fully-fledged songwriter as well. And now she’s bringing all of this together into a wholly-new sound that you’ll find electrifying.