

Faithfull. . .

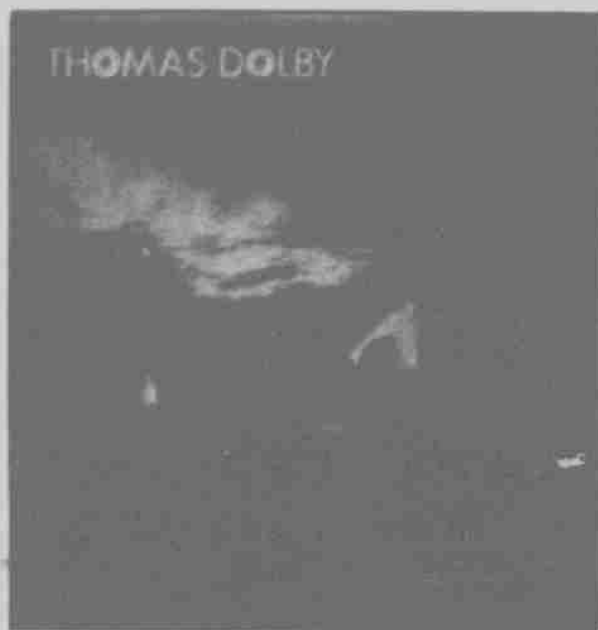
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Everyone of the eight cuts on the disc takes a very deep look at life of the character involved in the song. Most of the material was written by Faithfull and Reynolds, who also helped produce. The lyrics sometimes take the listener over when Faithfull pulls pure emotion from inside to tell her story. The mostly enjoyable instrumentation never drops below acceptable, but also note that it wouldn't get five stars by itself. Overall, Faithfull gets her message across with considerable success, and listening to the album can arouse a feeling of interest in the listener.

I don't think Marianne Faithfull is looking for more of the commercial success she once knew too well with the release of this new disc. That's very fortunate, because with the type of attitude Faithfull takes on the album, the listener enjoys the success of having something worthwhile to listen to. This album is a must for Faithfull fans, a maybe for those who enjoyed *Broken English*, and something to think about for those who want to experiment with well written true-to-life lyrics.

— Todd R. Tystad

Dolby sound: Fun, fresh music



Blinded By Science
Thomas Dolby
Harvest

Record buying is getting too complicated.

There are too many options outside of the regular old LP. These days there are EPs, singles, 12-inch discs, mini LPs and so on and so on.

When I went in to pick up the Thomas Dolby album, I thought that I had only one selection. Hence, I ended up with *Blinded By Science* — a mini LP with five songs. However, this is not the album.

The official album is called *The Golden Age of Wireless*.

But that is somewhat irrelevant at this point.

Included in the five songs on this mini are, of course, the techno-smashes "She Blinded Me With Science" and "One Of Our Submarines."

Dolby's work is an excellent example of the new taste in music. Upbeat and danceable with no real message, this record drips with synthesizers and drum programs.

What this album doesn't drip is tired and overworked themes. After all, how many artists today sing about a stranded ship or windpower? And the only other group that has devoted time to robots is Styx. And, oh yes, Neil Young.

On "She Blinded Me With Science," Dolby vocodes:

*It's Poetry in motion
When she turns her eyes to me
As deep as any ocean
As sweet as any harmony
She blinded me with science*

This is just fun music.

The second side of the record offers three selections, "Windpower," "Airwaves" and "Flying North," all of which appeared on "Wireless."

The most memorable song of the three, "Airwaves," is very smooth — almost trance-like. It moves along like a spring breeze on a warm afternoon. One listen to it and you're hooked.

A surprise comes on the list of background vocalists. Mutt Lange — connected with such heavy metalers as Van Halen — backs Dolby on the single. From Van Halen to Dolby, that's pretty diverse!

Dolby goes through the album like a lit-

tle boy locked overnight in an electronic toy store. It's obvious that he is having fun with his music, and that always makes a difference in the final product.

This won't be one of the biggest records of all time, but it should more than establish Thomas Dolby as one of today's most promising talents.

— Randy Wymore

Old spark missing from Reed's effort



The Bird
Jerry Reed
RCA

I used to anxiously look forward to each new Jerry Reed album. Featured on them were some of the best musicians, songs and sounds to come out of Nashville in the early- to mid-seventies. The lyrics were sharp, the production was tight and more than anything else, Reed delighted in showing off what an accomplished musician he was. His guitar playing was innovative at times, and his voice was actually quite pretty when he chose to show it off. Thus, albums like *Georgia Sunshine*, *Ko Ko Joe* and *Hot A'Mighty* were recognized as excellent pieces of musicianship and Jerry Reed was hailed as being the best of the "new breed" of country music performers.

Then, something happened. Or more accurately, two things happened, that sent Reed's recording career into a tailspin. First, Chet Atkins stopped producing his albums. Although Atkins was responsible for some of the most abominable examples of the dreaded "Nashville sound," his production skills were second to none when he got Reed into the studio. He seemed to lend an air of order and coherency to the proceedings, something for which Reed has never had a reputation.

The other thing that happened is that Reed fell in with bad company — Burt Reynolds. Burt thought Jerry was really neat, a "good ol' boy," in the vernacular. It wasn't the musicianship that impressed Reynolds, but rather, it was that "When You're Hot, You're Hot" and "U.S. Male" were such darned funny songs. Burt likes to yuck it up, you know.

So, Burt made Jerry a movie star and soundtrack superstar. In the meantime, Reed's albums became pure schlock, directionless and sadly undistinguished from the multitudes of albums cranked out daily in Nashville.

Last year, Reed made a conscious attempt to revitalize his sagging recording career. He found refuge in Muscle Shoals, Ala., second only to Austin, Texas, as a recording center for wayward country music singers. Unfortunately, though, he did not hook up with Johnny Sandlin or Barry Beckett or any number of other credible producers stationed in Muscle Shoals, but rather, Rick Hall, a man whose main claim to fame was producing most of the Osmond Brothers fine recordings.

Admittedly, Reed's music started to improve somewhat; however, I suspect this was due more to his own efforts than Hall's. But, when you compare last year's *Man With a Golden Thumb* or his newest record, *The Bird*, with some of his past efforts, it is apparent the old spark is still missing.

Reed starts off with a pale cover of CCR's "Down on the Corner" and limps on from there. "Down on the Corner," "Hard Times" and "Good Time Saturday Night" all have the same tired themes, and in some cases, even the same words. "The Bird" is an idiotic novelty song (Reed used to be one of the few artists able to handle such material, as classics like "Amos Moses," "Crude Oil Blues" and "Lord Mr. Ford" bear out), as is "I'm a Slave."

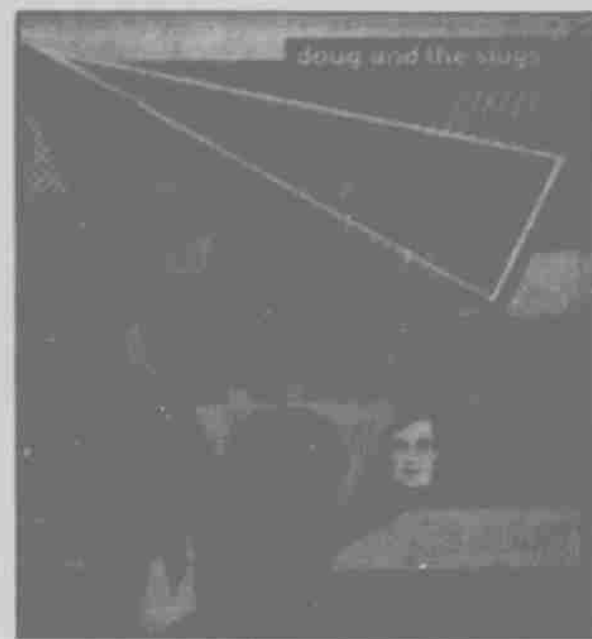
Reed does do fairly well for himself on

"Red River," "I Want to Love You Right" and "I Get Off On It." Reed's first number one song in a decade. "She Got The Goldmine (I Got the Shaft)" is also pleasant enough; however, it was on his last LP as well, and the repetition here is unnecessary.

Realistically, Jerry Reed will probably never be as good as he was in the 1970s. It's a shame, too, because, although it's not obvious on records like *The Bird*, the talent is there. It seems the converse of "When You're Hot" is also true: when you're cold, you're cold.

— Mike Frost

Canadians play classic rock 'n' roll



Music For The Hard of Thinking
Doug and the Slugs
RCA

Canada has, for one reason or another, always held a certain air of mystery for me. With a country that acts as home base for the likes of Loverboy, April Wine and Rush, I've often wondered if there would be anything else to listen to aside from Anne Murray. Well, contrary to my own belief, Canada really does have a degree of variation in its music. Take for example the band that is known as Doug and the Slugs.

When listening to only a song or two from Doug and the boys, you can tell in a moment that this band knows how to play classic rock 'n' roll. Every song is

a new experience in the sound of the band and the sound of vocalist Doug Bennett.

With the release of their third album entitled *Music for the Hard of Thinking*, Doug and the Slugs display their same old gusto, but are just now showing signs of wear and tear.

Doug and the Slugs' previous albums released in the United States were titled *Wrap It* and *Cognac and Bologna*. The latter was the disc that displayed the most energy, with Bennett at his best. The instrumentation was flawless and matched the vocal endeavors of Bennett. The album contained enough blues-style rock 'n' roll to wear you out with only one play through. This year the band has come back from its recording break with the same old style, but *Music for the Hard of Thinking* just isn't what you would expect from good ol' boy Doug.

Music for the Hard of Thinking was written almost entirely by Bennett. The two covers are, unfortunately, the cuts that seem the most interesting. The old Isley Brothers tune "Nobody But Me" gets most of the attention on the disc, yet with careful evaluation, it falls into equal status with the other songs on the album. The most serious lag in the overall feeling is Bennett's lyrics. They fall to the level of fair on a couple of cuts, but are hastily rescued by the never failing guitar work of John Burton and Rich Baker. Therein lies the fun of the Slugs. One can only wonder how much influence Booker T. had here. I personally thought the influence of anyone of prominence would have helped out the keyboards, which at times drag a little too much. Overall, it can't be denied that the Slugs are an interesting, as well as talented, band.

Music for the Hard of Thinking is not the best work done by Doug and the Slugs. I think their best work would be done in live performance. Their character expressed over the course of their second and third albums has gone from the theme of the snarling hood to a more "mod" approach, and this could be the reason for the lag in attitude. Doug and his band are nothing to pass off as uninteresting, but the fact is they won't stake their claim to fame on *Music for the Hard of Thinking*. Say a prayer to the M.G.'s and hope for a live album from Doug and the band next time.

— Todd R. Tystad

P.O. Pears

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