

Album Review

Critic forgives
Richard Thompson's
Amnesia

By David A. Blymire

Richard Thompson, the quintessential folk-rock guitar hero and songwriter has recorded an essentially likeable album, *Amnesia*.

Thompson writes songs about characters who would never exist in real life, yet you could swear you know people like them. His songwriting style has been described as a "ballroom" style, expressing humorously exaggerated human qualities that become somewhat bitterly ironic at times, or pensive at others.

Richard Thompson
Amnesia
(Capital Records)

But while *Amnesia* isn't a bad album, it fails to reach the heights of *Across a Crowded Room* or *Daring Adventures*, his two most recent albums.

But this competent Richard Thompson album is still worth a good listen.

"Turning of the Tide" opens the album, regretting the current social acceptance of casual sexual encounters. "Boys all say you look so fine/Don't come back for a second time/You can't hide from the Turning of the Tide."

The theme of contorted romance continues in "Gypsy Love Songs," in which the poet Thompson shows his ability to turn a clever phrase. "Stillborn love, passionate dreams, pitiful greed/And the silver tongues of the tinkler girls/Who throw the book of life at you/But don't know how to read."

In "Jerusalem on the Jukebox," Thompson turns his gaze toward what theologians call the "health and wealth" gospel of television's PTL Club, in which financial reward is promised to the faithful.

"At poolside picnics they chant for Ferraris and furs/Their muscle-tone sharpens but their hold on reality blurs/You can have your cake and eat it, and never have to puke up a thing," he sings.

"Yankee Go Home" addresses frustration over the presence of American troops in Europe, through the point-of-view of a young man. "My girlfriend won't talk to me/Since she met with a sailor from the land of the free/I'm tired of being alone/Yankee go home."

But the bearded singer from Britain isn't only a social commentator.

As a balladeer, Thompson pours on sweet sentiment like rich molasses. In "Waltzing's for Dreamers," he sings, "Oh play me a blue song and fade down the light/I'm sad as a proud man can be sad tonight/Just let me dream on, oh just let me sway/While the sweet violins and the saxophones play."

Amnesia, while more commercially tuned than some of Thompson's other recent work, probably won't see much commercial air play, but those who like quality music and poetry will continue to seek him out.

Santa Claus
arrives early
at PSH

Santa Claus arrived at Penn State Harrisburg early this year and asked one of our roving reporters to find out what all the good little boys and girls on campus want for Christmas this year. Following is the dialogue that occurred.

By Derrick Stokes

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Hum Bug!"

"Hey Santa, that's no to way feel during this holiday. Get with the program. There are many students at Penn State Harrisburg who are counting on you."

"Derrick, it's not like I have enough houses to visit already."

"Santa, wasn't it your idea that I go undercover and get Christmas wishes from the students?"

"Okay, okay. Lay it on me."

"Scott Squeglia and Angie Giddens (finance majors) want world peace. Can you handle that, Santa?"

"That's a hard one. What a minute! We could give Yassir Arafat a visa, have a panel discussion, then settle the problems in the Middle East."

"I bet our stock holders would love that one, Santa. Our toy factory would go under faster than the Titanic."

"You're right, scratch that one. Tell them to join the Peace Corps."

"Felicia Loreto (secondary education major) wants a trip to Washington, D.C. to tell the government what should be done about education in the United States."

"Tell Felicia to change her major to political science. Next one, Derrick."

"Mark Malhenzie (secondary education) and Steve Mack want a white Christmas. Can you make it snow?"

"Derrick, you know I can't do that. Tell those guys to move to Cleveland or Buffalo."

"Can you help Todd McCleary (criminal justice) then? He wants a date with Brooke Shields."

"Tell Todd, Mr. T asked first. Do you think he'll settle for a poster?"

"I don't think so Santa. But I think he'll settle for a case of Old Milwaukee Light."

"So be it. What's next, Derrick?"

"Some guy named Jim Bailoni (information systems) wants more girls delivered to Penn State Harrisburg."

"God, Derrick! This red suit sure makes me look like a pimp, doesn't it? I think I'll leave Jim free tickets to the next ERA convention."

"He'll be jumping for joy, Santa. They'll be nothing but women there."

"Derrick, after that convention, Jim would be a changed man."

"You remember Gene McCoy (public policy), Santa. He will be graduating in December. Can you get him a job?"

"Hey, isn't Gene on the basketball team? How about if I could get the basketball team a couple of seven-footers? Then they could compete against other schools. Who are they playing next, North Carolina?"



"I don't know, Santa. I think they're playing Lancaster Bible next. But what about Gene's job?"

"The Marines are looking for a few good men."

"Santa, lots of students want cars this year. Rick Chiavetta (EET) wants a black Lamborghini with a CD player and a cellular phone. Nancy Kelly (finance) wants a red BMW convertible. Dennis Crabill (secondary education) wants a Mustang GT convertible. And Jim Sknock wants a Blazer 4x4."

"Derrick, you know I can't get all those cars in my sleigh. Though I could probably squeeze in a couple of Yugos. What do you think?"

"You really can't compare a Yugo with a Lamborghini, Santa."

"I know what you mean, Derrick. I'll send them some revved up Pintos."

"Money is also a big wish item. Troy Sieg (EET) wants \$1 million. Stephanie Thomas (elementary education) wants \$2 million. Santa, you want me to get your check book?"

"No way! What do I look like? Donald Trump? We're not the government. We can't go in debt. Tell Troy and Stephanie to keep playing the lottery."

"Calm down, big fella. Your face is as red as your suit. How about something light? Brian Steidle (finance) wants some peace and quiet."

"How about living in a cardboard box in the middle of Times Square?"

"Are you serious, Santa?"

"Of course not. Some earplugs will do the trick for Brian."

"You're not gonna believe this Santa but Steve Conrad (humanities/business) wants his roommate to grow some hair on his head."

"How 'bout a nice hat for Steve's roommate, Derrick?"

"Elton John wears a lot of hats, Santa. Maybe Elton can lend him a few."

"Maybe? But it's my job to hand out gifts, right?"

"Right. Santa, I hope you can give Debbie Everett's wish some extra consideration. Debbie (public policy) wants to make up with her parents. She said that she doesn't have much time because her parents are getting older."

"That's what Christmas should be about, Derrick. Like my all-time favorite band used to sing, All You Need Is Love. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good finals period."

Merry
Christmas
from the
Capital Times
staff



Lack of study
days has
students in
a frenzy

By Cheryl Phillips

What is all the excitement about; what is it? According to *Webster's Ninth New Dictionary*, frenzy is a temporary madness; thus, "finals frenzy" is a madness occurring specifically at final exam time. The agitation and excitement may be accompanied by headaches and ulcers. Feelings of anxiety, worry and stress seem to occur with the frenzy. Coke (soda), coffee, and other stimulants are dominant during this madness.

This semester, Penn State has opted to make the final examination week Dec. 12-16; Dec. 17 is for exam conflicts. The last day of classes is Dec. 9. Unfortunately, the University does not see a need to have one or two extra study days exist on the weekends.

Many students feel that this does not allow for adequate final exam review.

"Regular" studying for their classes is done on the weekends and to study for cumulative (some aren't comprehensive) finals during a two-day period is just not enough.

Other post-secondary schools such as Delaware Valley College and the University of Delaware allow for at least one additional day of studying.

During the weekend before finals, many students are found trying to cram materials taught over a 15-week semester.

Known as a "suitcase" college by many, Penn State Harrisburg's parking lots are quite filled. Those nearing complete capacity include the dormitory lots, with students electing to stay at school (instead of going home) to study for final exams.

Throughout the weekend, premium study areas are filled early. These priority spaces include the Black Cultural Arts Center (BCAC), the Heindel Library, the Gallery Lounge, and deluxe classrooms found in the Olmsted Building.

Not your average classroom, the few deluxe models include upholstered seating (not found in the library) with tables arranged in a square (as if for a seminar), which allows for about 20 people. Of course, you can't get much studying done with that many people, so your study group will have from three to 10 people.

One structural design and construction engineering technology (SDCET) major said that last semester, he and his friends alternated at dinnertime so that they could keep the classroom.

Nga Pham, an electrical engineering technology (EET) major, stayed in the BCAC to study.

Reviewing lecture notes and labs on Saturday, she stayed until 3 a.m. Sunday. Pham went home and returned to the BCAC around 11 a.m. and left again, near 3 a.m. Monday.

To ensure a small degree of serenity

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