

Bonnie: bittersweet, bluesy



Ray Wise strikes a contemplative pose here in a scene from *Hamlet*, the current offering of UNC's Playmakers Repertory Company. Tom Haas, artistic director of PRC, directs this classic story of a young man's attempt to control his passions in order to meet society's expectations. *Hamlet* runs at 8 Tuesday through Saturday evenings, with 2 p.m. Sunday matinees and will continue through Feb. 4. Contact the box office in Graham Memorial (933-1121) for additional information.

Okay now, let's see: There's Linda Ronstadt, Emmy Lou Harris and Dolly Parton in their school, yeah, then there's Ann Wilson, Suzi Quatro and Stevie Nicks in their school, and then of course there's Gladys Knight, Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross in their school...and then there's Bonnie Raitt in her school...wait, I mean All the schools...oh, her own school but...wow this is really strange, the lady is in a class all by herself, yet she can definitely fit into literally all classes. This unique quality of flexibility is most obvious in Raitt's newest release on Warner Brothers Records *Sweet Forgiveness*.

On the album, the raunchy-sweet, blues/rocking vocalist and guitarist chooses an excellent repertoire of tunes, and, I swear I can hear Emmy Lou Harris in the Karla Bonoff tune "Home" welcomes Payne prove itself. Behind Bonnie, Will McFarlane plays electric guitars, Jeff Labes on keyboards, Dennis Whitted on drums, and the legendary Freebo on fretless bass. These guys are great. Throughout the album, they display very clean, very tight arrangements that tell me they are no more a "back-up" band than The Section was to James Taylor.

Side one begins really well in a quick-paced blues. Earl Randall tune "About to Make Me Leave Home." Now, Bonnie Raitt plays slide guitar, and on this track, she plays it to death. Sweet, slick tones and good blues/rock taste. Track two you've probably heard — a nice, rocking remake of Del Shannon's oldie "Runaway." A catchy arrangement and Raitt's rough vocals keep this tune from being tossed over in the pile of remakes. Next, the pace slows down for a beautiful rendition of Mark Jordan's "Two Lives." Pleasantly surprising. Bill Payne sits in on keyboards for the song and adds a subtle touch of Little Feat to Raitt and the band. Michael McDonald and Rosemary Butler join Bonnie in some of the prettiest harmonies on the album. The last track on side one is probably the best on the album. Eric Kaz's "Gambler Man" must have been written for Bonnie Raitt. A hard-pushed rocker, the tune still remains contained enough to prove the band as a really

professional unit. This is a good side. Nice variety of tunes and not really any that you have to get up and skip over on the stereo.

Side two starts off with the title track "Sweet Forgiveness." This is a toe-tappin' backwoods song with excellent guitar work from McFarlane. You know, in this tune, I swear I can hear Emmy Lou Harris in the background, but she's not on the liner notes, so I guess not. The second cut is a Jackson Browne tune, "My Opening Farewell." The boys play this one really well, but I kinda wish Bonnie would let Mr. Browne sing it. I mean, she doesn't sing it badly, quite the contrary, but Jackson Browne's lyrics are written for Jackson Browne's voice, if you know what I mean. "Three Time Loser" is the side's next cut, and you've most likely heard this one on the radio. A nice, catchy

records

By Gil Templeton

Sweet Forgiveness
Bonnie Raitt

tune with some great slide guitar work by Bonnie (that still amazes me!) Track four, entitled "Takin' My Time," was written by Bill Payne and displays definite qualities of Little Feat. The tempo is fairly slow, but the band pushes the tune hard, and McFarlane gets to show off on slide guitar. Easily one of the best cuts on the album. The last track, a Karla Bonoff tune "Home," welcomes Payne back to the Fender Rhoades piano, and John David Souther, joining Bonnie on some easy Nashville harmonies. A nice mellow song to end an album...

Rock, blues, soul, country — Bonnie Raitt embodies all these qualities, from her rock/hard slide guitar blues licks, to her sometimes rough, sometimes sweet, always right vocals. *Sweet Forgiveness* gives us possibly the most delicious taste of Bonnie Raitt and her band that we have had to date.

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