

Dolby: mediocre fluff

Thomas Dolby
Aliens Ate My Buick
EMI/Manhattan Records

by Scott Gordon

There is no indication of who or what Thomas Dolby was listening to when he put together his third solo album, *Aliens Ate My Buick*. Funk, certainly, and undoubtedly synthesizer-whiz Larry Fast. Bebop and swing can be heard as well, but to combine the whole group must have been difficult. Dolby does it, though, and does it with his usual panache and wit.

However, there is too much of a mix and too much wit and satire. The album is eminently danceable and toe-tapping enough to listen to, but that is about it. There is none of the dead-on lunacy of "She Blinded Me With Science" or "Europa and the Pirate Twins". Dolby, as always,

dazzles the listener with his technical virtuosity and satire. But he seems content with the look-what-I-can-do school of musicianship.

As admirable as this treatment and attitude may be, it does get redundant after a time. The bebop driven (and keyboard powered) "The Key to Her Ferrari" was great at first listen, as is the salsa-spiced "Hot Sauce", but the magic wears off very quickly. The sardonic "My Brain is Like a Sieve" causes laughter and tears, but after the second or third listen, it's difficult to care about the emotional problems Dolby is writing about. It is all facade and show, with nothing to hold the listener.

The same is true for the entire album; all fluff and nothing solid. For dancing, "Aliens Ate My Buick" will be enjoyed by Thomas Dolby fans and non-fans alike, but do not expect to work up a sweat dancing to it very many times.

Politics, humour make Bishop at SUB special

Heather Bishop with Sherry Shute
/ Jennifer Berezan
SUB Theatre
September 16

review by Darren Salyn

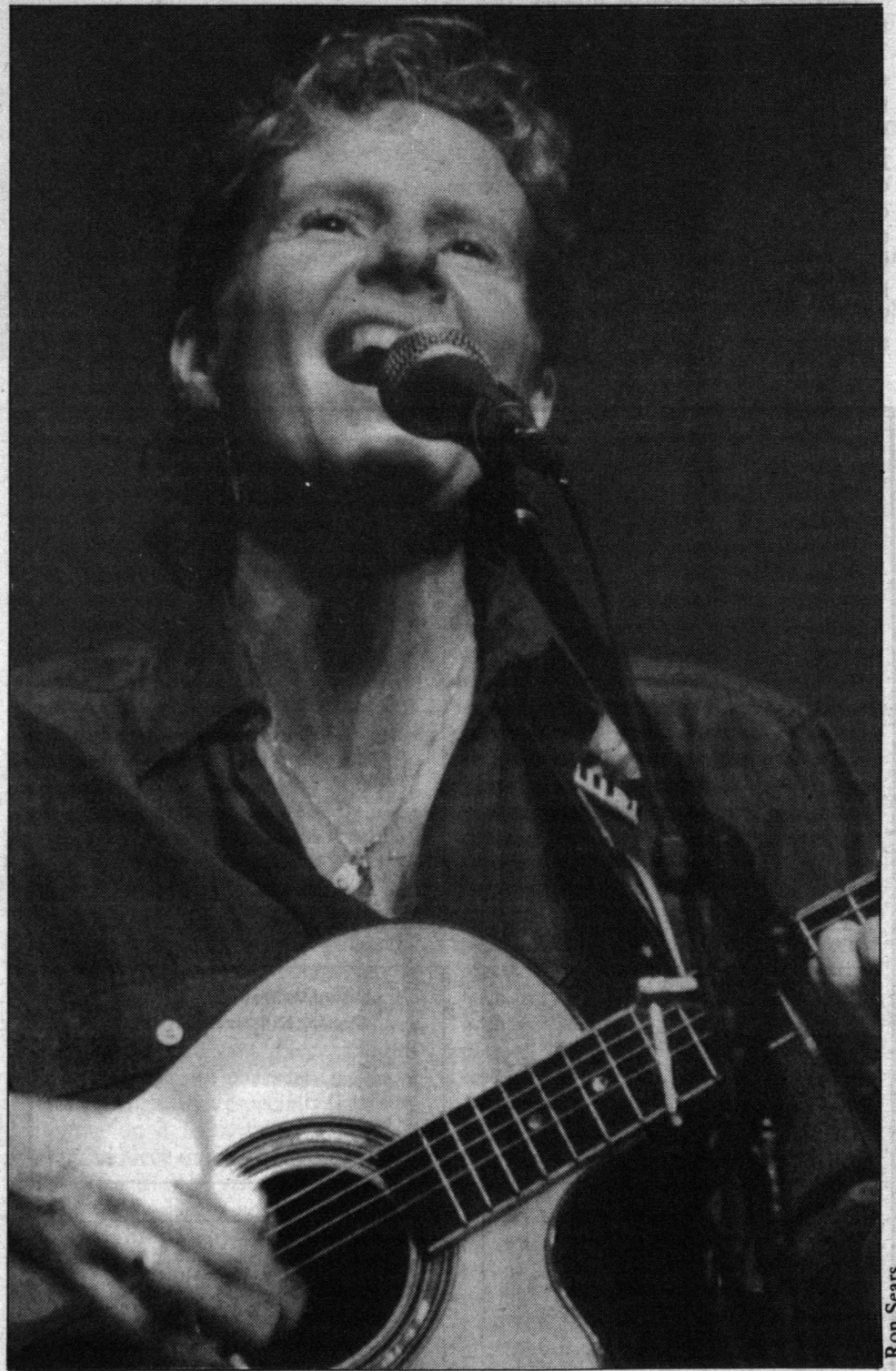
When you go to listen to a folk concert, you can expect to hear strong messages within the songs because lyrics are the most prominent aspect (for the most part) of today's folk music. Heather Bishop and Jennifer Berezan are two artists using the music to bring across their points of view on many issues. That's exactly what they did last Friday night.

The show was opened by Berezan, a young singer who charmed her way to the appreciative and enthusiastic applause of the near sold-out crowd at the SUB Theatre. The 27 year old native Calgarian has just cut her debut album in California and promoted it throughout her show. Her lyrics tackled many controversial social issues including the women's movement. But the tensions that can surround such issues were subdued by Jennifer's polite sense of humor, apparent when she addressed the audience and within some of her songs. This humour gave her show a light-hearted atmosphere. In traditional

folk style, Jennifer stood on stage alone with her acoustic guitar and a sweet tone in her voice that made her very easy and enjoyable to listen to.

Heather Bishop has always been known for her strong political and social views and her active role in the feminist movement; therefore, it's not surprising to hear her sing and rally for Halnya Freeland (Edmonton Strathcona NDP), who organized the show. Heather has a very strong stage presence and a voice that is as powerful and bold as the words she sings. She doesn't use her show to preach to the audience, keeping it entertaining and light throughout. She took her time to talk to the audience, which ranged in age from middle age to young children, and relaxed them enough to actively participate throughout the show, particularly during her children's songs.

Heather was accompanied by lead guitarist Sherry Shute, who was an absolute pleasure to listen to, with her selection of tasteful chords, chord tones, and blue notes. It was a pleasant change to hear someone who avoids the speed lead guitar olympics which are a popular trend nowadays. Sherry did, however, prove she could let loose and dig into "I'm Not the One" with a wailing solo. Although Ms. Shute has no formal training, she intends



Heather Bishop performed her varied repertoire for a mixed crowd of both adults and children at SUB Friday night.

to study at the Guitar Institute of Technology in California next year.

When speaking with Heather after the show, I found her to be very polite and attentive without forcing herself or her ideals. She says she would love to sign on to a major record label which would result in greater distribution and promotion of her albums. She has no wish to cross over

into other mediums of music, being quite happy with her present following and feels that this following would be lost by venturing into mainstream markets. When asked about retirement plans, she simply said, "Oh, I think I'll be going 'til I'm eighty," which clearly shows she loves what she's doing. The concert showed that her fans love it as well.

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