Fearing and Loving

by Roy Thorpe

simplicity of his show put the em- goes with him. phasis right where it should be, on the songs and his guitar playing.

Inhisplaying you can hear jazz, blues, Celtic, rock and country overtones. He spins a unique hybrid of these with a good sense of story. In Blind different styles.

require wild, thrashing, aggressive Stephen Fearing says "I can't write playing, as he is in slow, melodic songs about things that don't mean passages that are deceptive in their anything to me." If you were one of simplicity. In Trying Times Fearing the 250 who saw him live at the combines an old Roberta Flack tune Flamingo last week you believe him. with a riff lifted from the Clash's Fearing plays with a passion that can London Calling. In the gentle ballad only come from such commitment. Little Child Eyes Fearing sings of a He appeared on stage in black friend's battle with alcoholism. "And jeans, a black shirt and black boots. it comes down to you, you and your The stage was also completely black. courage/It comes down to you, you The only thing not lost in the dark- and your pride." Fearing makes the ness was his face and his guitar. The change effortlessly and the audience

Fearing is an engaging performer because he is believable. He comes Fearing is a master of the guitar. across like a modern day minstrel His style cannot be described as sim- with nothing but his songs to sell. He ply folk, although he has gained a sings "creativity and ambition will reputation as a folk singer-songwriter. keep you hungry," and you get a sense this is what has kept him going.

Horses Fearing tells the story of Frank

He is as effective in songs that and Jesse James and their stolen blind getaway horses. He turns this into an allegorical tale of politicians and their inability to see the truth.

Many of his songs deal with themes of self awareness. In Race of Fractions he sings "We have studied this equation but we still don't understand." In another song he sings "We are mirrors to each other and blind to what we see." Fearing says he has been accused of using song writing as therapy, and admits it's probably true.

It has been well over a year since Fearing's last recording, Blue Line, was released in Canada on the True North label. Fearing hopes to have a new release out in the spring and his new songs were well received by the Flamingo audience. Songs like "I've got a railway station where my heart should be," showed that Fear-Fearing combines poetic images ing hasn't lost his ability to turn a

This was Fearing's fourth appear-



FREE TUITION SECOND TERM

St. Stephen-A-Fearing

val and opened for Sarah McLachlan of his next release.

ance in Nova Scotia since the release | at the Rebecca Cohn. Fearing played of Blue Line. He appeared most solo at the Flamingo but he hopes to notably at the Lunenburg Folk Festi- have a band when he tours in support

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Is Alannah too good to be true?

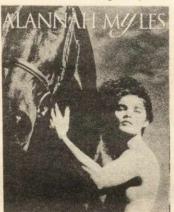
by Dak Jiordani

For artists whose first album turns out to be a major league, grand slam home run, coming up with a comparable second record is a daunting, if not nearly impossible task. I'm no psychic, so I won't even try to predict how Rockinghorse will do on the charts, but I would guess that the record will have a hard time coming even close to the diamond status her self-titled debut album achieved.

Alannah Myles Rockinghorse Warner/ Atlantic

I'm not saying that it's a bad record, far from it. Alannah sounds better than ever; her raunchy, bluesy vocals have been tempered by David Tyson's production to a point that balances power with control, strength with range, and enthusiasm with endurance. The song-writing is nearly perfect- every song on the album features a well-balanced mix of storytelling, intelligence, and entertainment value. Also, the selection of songs is widely varied; from the powerful lead off track "Our World, Our Times," a song about the urban jun-

kids who live there, to the countryblues tinged 'The Last Time I Saw William," to the straight ahead, nononsense rock & roll of "Lies and Rumors," this album combines elements from a broad repertory of mu-



sical genres and somehow makes them flow together. Even the first single, "A Song Instead Of A Kiss," a moving ballad that sounds like it came from Andrew Lloyd Webber's Phantom of the Opera, seems perfectly natural coming from the lips of one of Canada's best female rock singers.

This is a great album... maybe too great. In terms of style and sound,

gle and the social degeneration of the Rockinghorse strays so far from the Alannah's first album, such that the two records could have been made by two entirely different people. No disrespect to other performers intended, but Rockinghorse contains a level of recording quality that most artists don't achieve until the completion of their fifth or even sixth album. Unless her first single gets a lot of airplay she may find herself in the unenviable position of being "too good, too soon." For Myles to be a leader in the music industry, she must forge ahead and find her own path. But, she may have made a tragic mistake in being so far ahead of the times- her followers, her audience, may have become lost. If that occurs, it will be a sad day when her Rockinghorse is put out to pasture prematurely. RATING: 9



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