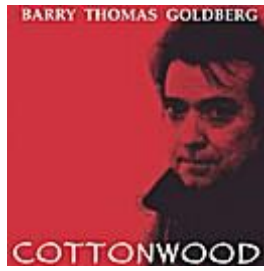


Mp3 Barry Thomas Goldberg - Cottonwood



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Modern Rock - A powerful collection of songs about the world and the streets. 13 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: NEW...."Remember New Orleans" free download of Goldberg's new tribute song to New Orleans at ironweeds.com Album Description: The attempt to balance idealism and realism, courage and fear in an increasingly frightening world, is the thread that runs through this powerful collection of songs. Metaphorical and literal, humorous and moody, Cottonwood is Barry Thomas Goldberg's follow-up to last year's critically acclaimed "Empire Moon".

splendid reviews 5/6/2004 Given the timing of Cottonwood's release, in the midst of the never-ending Iraqi non-war, it's hard not to hear the album's peace-loving lyrics as a direct indictment of the state of our world. Throughout his long running, although unfortunately fringe musical career, Goldberg has made it a point to speak out for his causes, and Cottonwood is no exception. Even the song titles speak volumes: "We're All Africans" and "World War III" certainly offer no nominal PC patina, and the actual lyrics are even more straightforward. "WWIII" heralds - none too sardonically - the arrival of Orwell's imagined nightmare under the flag-waving cloak of the Patriot Act: "Lose your liberty / For security / Don't you want to be free? / Or are you like the enemy?" Meanwhile, "Utopia" contrasts the elusive promised land with "The killing grounds of Baghdad / The blood-stained hills of Korea / People shouting in the streets of Tehran...." and finally, "...The lonely houses of America." As unequivocal as Goldberg's protestations may be, he nonetheless avoids sounding preachy or partisan. Certainly, George W. Bush would do well to take Goldberg's message to heart, but ultimately, Cottonwood's political lyrics succeed via a healthy dose of moderation. There's no fiery anger here - only a calmly resigned sadness. It's dark and cynical, but all the more effective for its stark portrayal, leaving you with a more heartfelt version of the empty disbelief that often comes from watching the news. Of course, the political themes, as pervasive as they may be,

aren't the album's sole focus. There are also selections that detail love and life, most with a similarly resigned air. Tracks such as "When Heaven Was Close to Earth", "Rain and Cigarettes" and "Almost Blue" call to mind the wistful poesy of country soul, particularly as embodied by Whiskeytown/early Ryan Adams. And then there's "Portland Sun", which is quite simply the loveliest tribute to Elliott Smith yet penned. Over gentle acoustic picking, Goldberg perfectly captures the ethereal quality that so many have posthumously ascribed to Smith. "One more song and then I'm free at last / Now is the past / Freedom's choice, fortune's chance / Elliott Smith, Elliott Smith." But what of the music itself? Although Cottonwood's lyrics could certainly stand on their own, they don't exist in a vacuum. Rather, they're appropriately underscored with traditional rock 'n' roll compositions. The melodies work, the musicianship (including aging quirk-rocker Michael Yonkers in "Utopia" and "WWIII") is skillful and the recording is adequate. And even if Goldberg's vocal delivery is distractingly eighties-esque, none of these features eclipse the lyrics. Essentially, the music serves as a foundation - understated, yet strong and fitting - for Goldberg's sociopolitical commentary. Both literally and metaphorically, Cottonwood deserves a listen. -- Melissa Amos

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