



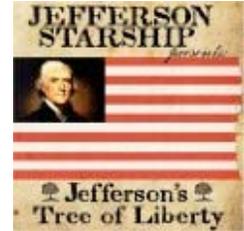
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## REVIEW

# Music Review: Jefferson Starship - *Jefferson's Tree Of Liberty*

Written by [David Bowling](#)  
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Life is good as founding member Paul Kantner remains in control of The Jefferson Starship. Long time cohort David Freiberg is still around as is guitarist Mark Aguilar. Cathy Richardson is now the lead female vocalist. She starred in the off Broadway production about Janis Joplin's life. Richardson's voice is powerful and pure but is closer to a Grace Slick sound than Joplin's, which should come as no surprise. Even Marty Balin joins the Starship for a couple of tunes.

*Jefferson's Tree Of Liberty* finds the Starship traveling in a new and unique musical direction. Succinctly put, this is a folk album. Songs such as "Pastures Of Plenty" by Woody Guthrie, "Chimes Of Freedom" by Bob Dylan, and "I Ain't Marching Anymore" by Phil Ochs are all presented in classic vocal form. Kantner and The Jefferson Starship can't quite escape their rock 'n' roll roots as the instrumental background veers from the classic folk formula. Think the Weavers in rock mode.

The first track sets the tone for most of the album. The old Weavers tune, "Wasn't That A Time," features the voices of Kantner, Freiberg, and Richardson. Richardson provides a wonderful balance on most of the harmonies contained on the album. This old historical folk song is enhanced by the violin of San Francisco music scene veteran David LaFlamme.

*Jefferson's Tree Of Liberty* is a virtual journey through folk history. The traditional "Follow The Drinking Gourd" is a metaphorical song of the underground railroad and features more harmonies by Kantner, Freiberg, and Richardson. The Phil Ochs protest song, "I Ain't Marching Anymore," is just Cathy Richardson's voice accompanied by an acoustic guitar.

It is interesting to hear a female sing this traditional male song. "Chimes Of Freedom" is the first Dylan song that the Jefferson Starship or The Jefferson Airplane ever recorded. "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" is the Weavers poignant love song. "Royal Canal" is the old Ian & Tyson tune about prison. Kantner strips the song to its basics and duets with Diana Mangano. "Come with the dust and gone with the wind" is a line from Woody Guthrie's "Pastures Of Plenty" which is presented in a version loyal to the original.

There are some other pleasant surprises contained on *Jefferson's Tree Of Liberty*. David Freiberg shines on the old Dino Valenti/Quicksilver song, "Cowboy On The Run." This gentle song of protest is resurrected with a modern sound. It's nice to have Marty Balin back. He brings his clear voice to the pure pop song, "Maybe For You." Richard Farina wrote "The Quiet Joys Of Brotherhood" shortly before his death. Here Darby Gould sings the song a capella.

*Jefferson's Tree Of Liberty* is not only an excellent album, it was also unexpected. Maybe that is the best part of Paul Kantner and The Jefferson Starship's latest release. The twists and the turns take the listener on a wonderful journey through a history of American folk music. It is a journey well worth taking.

I have been collecting vinyl records for over forty years and my collection is approaching 50.000 records. My wife Susan and children, Stacey and Amy, have learned to humor my passion. I am now settled in beautiful Whispering Pines, North Carolina where I read, listen to music, and live off the fat of the land.

## Comments

#1 – September 1, 2008 @ 17:09PM – Ethel Mann [[URL](#)]

BRAVO!

A THRILLING RELEASE, and a TIMELY one!

Ethel Mann

#2 – September 2, 2008 @ 13:15PM – Robert Butler [[URL](#)]

I was fortunate to win the JTOL cd in the MySpace JS contest last Sunday.

Got the cd Saturday August 30th.

I've played it about dozen times so far.

Definitely not a rock album. As I realized that I was mildly disappointed but I gotta tell ya, the more I hear this album the more I'm beginning to love it.

Definitely very subversive in the JA/ style and of course very true to their roots.

The only thing I'd add to the mix would be Grace Slick playing recorder on one of the tracks, which would bring in the early JA/Great Society vibe.

But hey, who's asking me? - lol

Great job Jefferson Starship!

And by the way, to have a fucking Jefferson Starship album 5 days before it's official release is cooler than words can express!

To Andromeda!

RB