

# 01. BEATIN' THE ODDS

(Banner Thomas, Dave Hlubek, Duane Roland)

# 02. DOUBLE TALKER

(Dave Hlubek, Duane Roland)

# 03. THE RAMBLER

(Dave Hlubek, Jimmy Farrar)

# 04. SAILOR

(Banner Thomas)

# 05. DEAD AND GONE

(Banner Thomas, Jimmy Farrar)

# 06. FEW AND FAR BETWEEN

(Bruce Crump, Steve Holland)

# 07. PENTHOUSE PAUPER

(J.C. Fogerty)

# 08. GET HER BACK

(Duane Roland)

# 09. POISON PEN

(Dave Hlubek, Steve Holland)

## BONUS TRACKS

# 10. Beatin' The Odds

(Live, 1980)

# 11. Few And Far Between

(Live, 1980)

# 12. Penthouse Pauper

(Live, 1980)

# 13. Dead And Gone

(Live, 1980)

Jimmy Farrar - Vocals

Dave Hlubek - Lead guitar, slide guitar

Steve Holland - Lead guitar

Duane Roland - Lead guitar, slide guitar

Banner Thomas - Bass guitar

Bruce Crump - Drums

Produced by Tom Werman for Julia's Music, Inc.

Recorded at: Bee Jay Recording Studios, Orlando, Florida

The Record Plant, Los Angeles, California

Recorded and Mixed by Gary Ladinsky

Assistant Engineers: Bill Vermillion & Gary Pritikin

Keyboards: Jai Winding

Executive Production and Direction: Pat Armstrong And Associates, Inc.

Tracks 10 - 13 recorded live at the Lakeland Civic Centre, Lakeland, Florida, December 31, 1980

Our Music is dedicated to you, the people, for without you there is no reason for this album. Thank you! - Molly Hatchet

Cover Art: Frazer

Back Cover Photos: Pat Armstrong, Sam Emerson and Mark Pripich

To those unsung heroes 'that keep of' Molly Hatchet rollin' (with pride): Our Road Crew, Mike Caviness, Bob Huckaba, George Wheeler, Pete Magdanz, Patty 'Sunshine' Ackar and of' magic fingers Steve Whyland - and from Jacksonville Fla... Keith Johnson.

Our Sound & Lights:

Clair Bros. Audio, Synergy Lights, See Factor and Clear Lights

...and especially to our friend and a damn good road manager

Jeff Webb - Thank you.

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# ROLL THE DICE...

MOLLY HATCHET'S SELF TITLED DEBUT ALBUM ISSUED IN 1978 CONFOUNDED THE CRITICS BY SELLING OVER A MILLION COPIES MAKING THEM ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SOUTHERN ROCK BANDS IN THE USA. AND, AS IF TO PROVE THAT IT WASN'T A FLUKE, THEIR FOLLOW-UP ALBUM 'FLIRTING WITH DISASTER' CONTINUED THE SUCCESS GOING DOUBLE PLATINUM AND EARNING A TOP TWENTY PLACING IN THE ALBUM CHARTS. SO, WHEN ORIGINAL LEAD VOCALIST DANNY JOE BROWN OPTED TO LEAVE THE BAND IN 1980 AND PURSUE A SOLO CAREER, MANY THOUGHT THAT HATCHET'S DAYS WOULD BE NUMBERED. NOTHING, HOWEVER, COULD HAVE BEEN FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH...

**OZZY OSBOURNE AND** Ronnie James Dio, David Lee Roth and Sammy Hagar, Bon Scott and Brian Johnson. Know what all of these pairs have in common? The first name was the original singer with a huge group, replaced by the latter name, who maintained the band's significant profile. Black Sabbath, Van Halen, M.D.C. Each had made their mark on a global scale when, for one reason or another, they needed a new frontman. But in every case, the 'new man' was already established in his own right. However, how many times has a big band brought in an unknown, and made it work? There is David Coverdale being drafted in by Deep Purple to take over from Ian Gillan and...erm...well...hang on, what about Jimmy Farrar and Molly Hatchet?

Ah, now we're talkin'. Farrar was brought in by the famed southern rock band in 1980, to replace Danny Joe Brown, and in many ways their third album, 'Beatin' The Odds', is his story.

Born in LaGrange, Georgia on December 8, 1950, Farrar had started out on the rocky road to fame in 1974 with a band called Raw Energy, and it was through this outfit that he eventually crossed paths with Hatchet.

"We had a lighting guy called Rocky Manbriette, who had once roadied for Molly Hatchet," recalls the singer. "One day he had to go down to Macon, Georgia to get a cheque from Pat Armstrong, who was Hatchet's manager. Rocky suggested that I come along with him - and that I bring a tape of Raw Energy."

So, Farrar made the pilgrimage that was to change his life. And he took the opportunity to play the aforementioned tape to Armstrong. After waiting for about three hours, the singer was summoned into to meet the man who would become his manager.

"Pat played three songs, and then offered me a contract. At first I thought he was offering to sign up the band, but it turned out that he only wanted me."



Photo 1



Faced with the dilemma of having to abandon his own band, in order to throw away the chance of working with a major music business player, Farrar took a practical approach...

"Raw Energy were a good bar band, but I had to think about how far we might be able to go. Pat's offer to me was a wake-up call, really. The way he put it was, 'Suppose the chance comes for you to join a bigger band? I want to know you're free to take the offer'. It made sense to me, so I signed up."

Now, it's inconceivable that Armstrong wasn't aware at the time — early in 1980 — that Danny Joe Brown was about to quit Hatchet. Clearly, he saw Farrar as a possible replacement. This was reinforced by none other than Hatchet producer Tom Werman, who encouraged Armstrong to pursue the young vocalist as the man to take the band into a new era.

**B**EFORE WE carry on with this tale, let's take a brief detour, because one cannot underestimate the role played by Werman in Molly Hatchet's success. In fact, it was he who got them their deal with Epic, where he'd been an A&R man for 12 years by the time he was introduced to the Jacksonville band whom many came to regard as Lynyrd Skynyrd's natural successors.

"I was down in Atlanta mixing a Cheap Trick single, when Pat Armstrong called and asked if a band he was representing could audition for me," explains Werman. "So, Hatchet came down to the studio, set up and played. I was impressed, and signed them."

Werman went on to produce the band's first two albums,

1978's self-titled debut and 'Hirtin' With Disaster' the following year, and was also the man at the helm when Farrar came in. Anyway, back on the main narrative line, it's three weeks after that fateful meeting between the Raw Energy singer and the big-time manager. At 2am, the former was just getting in after a local show, when the phone rang...

"It was Pat," says Farrar. "He asked if I'd like to audition for a band. I asked him who it was and he said, 'I can't tell you'. So, I replied, 'I can't come down to Macon as you want me to do unless I know who this band are. I might be wasting my time'. Eventually, he understood my point and told me — it was Molly Hatchet!"

Guitarist Dave Hlubek had a different slant on that story, when he spoke to Xavier Russell of Kerrang! magazine in 1985:

"I swear to God this is a true story. We were over at Jack (road manager) and Pat (manager) Armstrong's house in Macon, Georgia, one night. We'd flown in from Detroit where we'd just broken up a tour, and said, 'Pat, do you know anybody who can sing?'. 'Yeah, I know this guy up in LaGrange, Georgia — he's ugly but he can sing,' he replied. So we got him on the phone that night and I said, 'This is Dave Hlubek of Molly Hatchet'. And he had the cheek to come back with, 'Molly WRO?!'. Then I said, 'Can you sing?' And he said, 'Yeah, I can sing, but I'm real ugly; I can clear a coliseum'. He did not lie!"

However, needing no further encouragement, Farrar headed for Macon, and the audition that would make him a household name.





Duane Roland



Dave Hlubek



Steve Holland



Bruce Crump



Jimmy Farrar



Banner Thomas

"The band hired a local club called The Warehouse, and set up their full stage set. I walked in and did three songs with them: 'Bounty Hunter', 'Flirtin' With Disaster' and 'Dreams I'll Never See'. I knew those numbers, because we did them in Raw Energy, so I gave it my best shot, and hoped that would be good enough."

Legend has it that, having heard Farrar, guitarist Steve Holland said to the rest of the band, "We are wasting time here. Tell him to pack his bags and let's go to Jacksonville". Farrar was in! It was early March, 1980.

Famously, when Hlubek asked the singer whether he'd like the job, the latter responded, "Is a hog's ass ham? You could say he was keen on the opportunity!"

**B**ACK IN Jacksonville, Hatchet set about writing the songs that would make up their eagerly anticipated third album, with the new man playing a full role alongside Hlubek, Holland, third guitarist Duane Roland (a man claimed by Werman to be one of the most underrated guitarists in the world), bassist Banner Thomas and drummer Bruce Crump.

"They didn't have anything really prepared when I joined," explains Farrar. "So we really did start from scratch, and I was very much included in the process. I was never on the outside looking in. The first song I wrote was 'The Rambler' (which was to be a Top 100 single in America) – and I did the lyrics in about 20 minutes."

The writing process took about five weeks to complete, by which time the band had eight songs completed, and had also elected to include one cover, 'Penitence Pauper' from Creedence Clearwater Revival (originally on their 1969 album 'Bayou Country'). "Dave Hlubek was a big fan of Creedence," reveals Farrar, "and it was his decision that we should do that song."

By then, Hatchet had already established something of a tradition for including one cover per album. The Allman Brothers' 'Dreams I'll Never See' was on their debut, while 'Flirtin' With Disaster' featured The Valentinos' 1960s hit 'It's All Over Now'. This time, it was the highly rated John Fogerty number that was to get the Hatchet make-over.

With all the material in place, the band went to Bee Jay Studios in Orlando, Florida to record the album, working again with producer Werman. For Farrar, the studio experience was completely alien. But he adapted quickly to the demands...

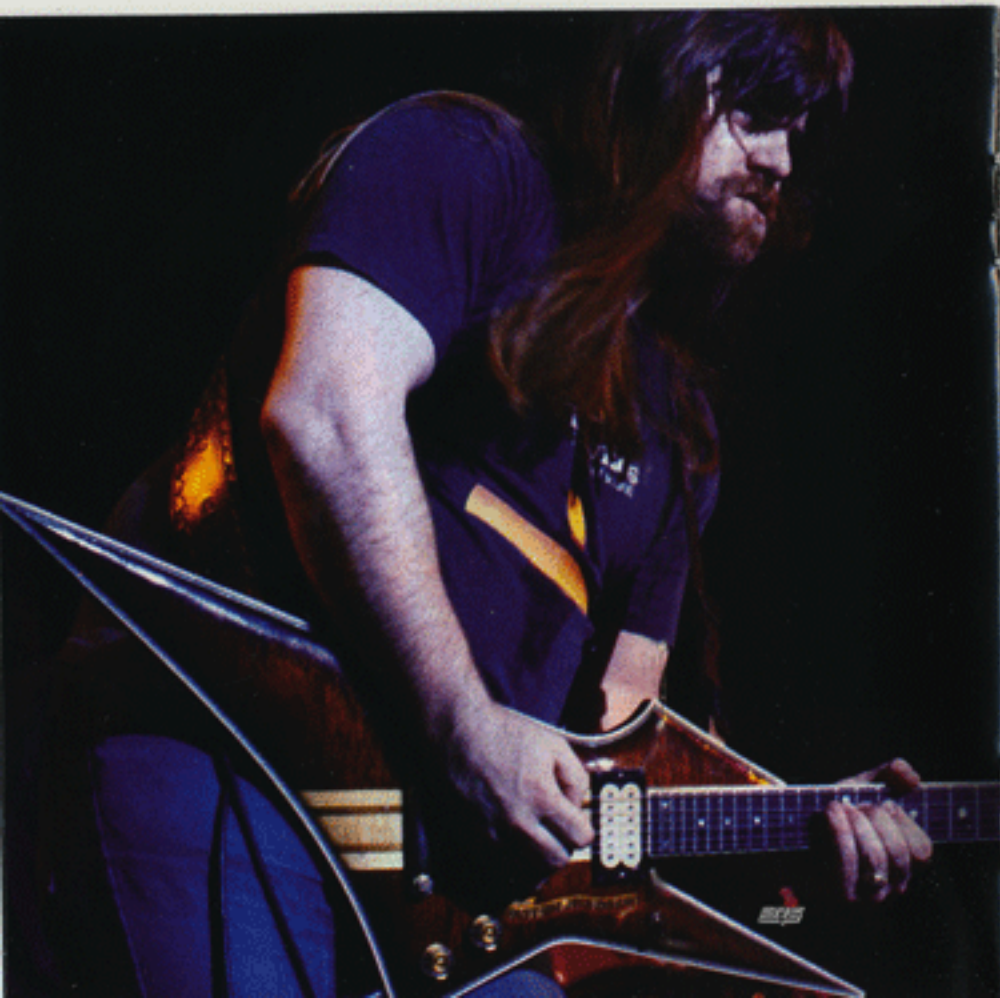
"I give Tom a huge amount of credit for the way things turned out. He was so easy to work with – one of the nicest guys I've ever met in the music business. From the beginning he gave me complete respect, and I tried to do the same to him. And he certainly got the best out of me."

Werman recalls his relationship with Farrar with equal warmth. "Jimmy wasn't like Danny. He really had a great work ethic in the studio, and wanted to deliver as much as he could. Sure, he didn't have Danny's personality, but that was a bonus in some ways. You see, Danny was a real party animal – all of the band were the same – and sometimes he allowed that to get in the way. Jimmy also had a strong voice, in his own way, but was committed to the task in hand. So overall, I have to say I really liked producing the guy."

"For me, being in the studio was kinda like being allowed to stay at Disneyland overnight – with the power still switched on," laughs Farrar. "I had a ball. But I was also aware of what was expected from me. We knew how to party in Hatchet, but I knew I had a lot to prove. I was stepping into some big shoes, and had to work that much harder to make sure I was worthy of the position. I couldn't afford to rest on my laurels – in fact, I had none to rest on at the time."

**JIMMY FARRAR** had a different type of vocal style to that of Danny Joe Brown. He also didn't have his predecessor's easy charisma and charm. In fact, in almost every respect he was far removed from Brown. But that was definitely in his favour. If Hatchet had merely brought in a Danny Joe facsimile, then they would have been doomed. By going for a new approach, they allowed the music to develop and mature. And it was doing so in a manner that nobody, outside of the band and Werman, might have expected.

"A lot of people claimed that I'd dragged Molly Hatchet



away from their southern roots, and into a more metal direction," sighs Farrar. "But I think that's missing the point. I don't believe the band was ever a southern one. I regarded us as a rock 'n' roll band *arbo* came from the south. That was also true when Danny was there. The music we made on 'Beatin' The Odds' wasn't outlined just by me, it was the way every one of us wanted to go. Sure, I loved heavy metal – still do – the power chords, the guitar riffs... it's like a steel needle being hammered into your heart. It's all down to perception, though. And we had that problem with some dickheads believing the band had sold out its origins, but that was far from the case."

While the basic recording was done at Bee Jay's, for the guitar overdubs and also the vocals, they relocated to the Record Plant in Sausalito, California. And Farrar underlined just how dedicated he was to the project – and delivering as much as possible – by doing his parts at an astonishing rate. "I did all my vocals in just five days," he says with an obvious pride. "That's about two songs per day."

However, don't get the idea that somehow it was a drab, grey existence for him in the studio. As mentioned, Hatchet had a reputation for partying hard – and they lived up to it this time around as well...

"You could never stop them from having a good time," recalls Werman. "And Jimmy definitely joined in with the rest. The difference was that he never got so drunk that he wasn't able to sing the next day. He always had it in mind that the record came first. I appreciated that."

***Jimmy Farrar: "I don't think I've ever drunk as much whisky as I did during my time with Hatchet."***

"Tom always made it clear that he was there to work, and wanted to get the album done with the minimum of fuss," adds Farrar. "I knew my responsibilities, and made sure I was in a fit state to deliver – but that didn't mean I kept away from the booze. I don't think I've ever drunk as much whiskey as I did during my time with Hatchet!"

While the band were working on the new album, they were also doing occasional shows, which meant extra pressure for Farrar. But he took it all in his stride – eventually...

"My first gig with the band was at the Kings Dominion Amusement Park in Virginia. We did two shows that day. I was used to playing with Raw Energy in front of about 27 people in a small bar. Now, I was onstage in front of 10,000 people! I went onstage, saw the **HUGE** crowd and hyperventilated – it was overwhelming. We opened the set with 'Bounty Hunter', and it was only when we were halfway through the song that my nerves started to steady!"

"But once I'd gotten over the stress and fear, I was fine, and the fans reacted really well. They encouraged me, and that gave me a big confidence boost. We also did a couple of new numbers, just trying them out, and they went down well."

Interestingly, the date of that debut show was May 9, 1980. In one of those odd twists of fate, Farrar's final gig with the band was at Six Flags in Atlanta in 1982 – on May 9!

Photo 2



**B**UT NOT everything was going smoothly for the new band. He was having a little trouble with some of the band on a personal level...

"They were being rather standoffish with me. But that's my fault. I can't blame them at all. You see my attitude when I joined was, 'OK, I ain't putting up with any shit from anyone. I'm gonna stand my ground'. There was some resentment because of that, and it took about three months for it to wear off. But like a sickness I eventually grew on them."

While Farrar's attitude might seem a little odd – new kid acting as if the others had something to prove – it may have helped him to focus on his part on 'Beatin' The Odds', playing a crucial role in its ultimate quality.

However, the singer was never left in any doubts as to the size of the band he'd joined. And the man recalls one incident in Denver that brought home the magnitude of Hatcher's following.

Photo 3



"I wandered onstage before we played our set, and was amazed. It was a massive place – and packed. There must have been about 20,000 people there – and Molly Hatcher were headlining. That was the moment I realised how big we were!"

For Farrar, though, the moment of accomplishment came in the company of just one other person, in Hawaii, soon after the album's release.

"I was driving along Highway One, with Bruce Crump's roadie, when the DJ on the radio suddenly said, 'Here's a new song from Molly Hatcher', and then he played 'Beatin' The Odds'. That was such a major moment for me. You see, I'd always dreamt of hearing myself on the radio – and here it was. It was as if my life's ambition had been fulfilled. In my eyes I'd made it."

**T**HE ALBUM was released in September 1980, and made it to number 25 in the US charts. In terms of chart position, this is the biggest record in Hatcher's

history, barring 'Hirin' With Disaster', which made it to number 19 in the States. This is worth mentioning, because so many people over the years have decried the Farrar era, and dismissed it as a failure. While Hatcher did subsequently go into a commercial decline, nonetheless this record was a triumph. In fact it went platinum.

Back then, the record got a distinctly mixed reception. Many appeared dismayed that these Jacksonville jaguars had moved in a more hard rock direction. But the passage of time has been more than kind to an album which now sounds forthright, dynamic and more than filler until the return of Danny Joe Brown.

"I was pleased with 'Beatin' The Odds'. Even when others knocked it, I remained convinced that one day it would get the respect it deserved. And now, if it's finally being re-assessed positively, then I can't say that I'm surprised. It's like a poison spreading... sooner or later it's gonna get ya!"

After the album's release, the band spent much of the next few months constantly on the road, with a regime that would cripple lesser constabulations. "We were doing almost a show every day on that tour, which was brutal," admits Farrar. "I'd never done anything quite like it before. But I coped very well. I found that I could come offstage absolutely shattered, but recover very quickly."

One of the highlights of the tour came on December 31, 1980, when Molly Hatcher and The Outlaws teamed up for a New Year's Eve show at the Lakeland Civic Center in Florida...

"Man, that was one amazing night," Farrar enthuses.

"We played so well, and it was recorded." In fact, six of the tracks from the set that night were pressed up as a promotional only live disc distributed to radio and press. You can hear four of those tracks as bonus material on this re-issue.

The performance reveals a great band in full flow. And there's no doubt that Farrar was a world class singer, more than able to represent both the established Hatcher songs and also his own music.

"I have to say that, by and large, I had no problems with the fans," concludes the man himself. "I was welcomed everywhere, and the songs we did from 'Beatin' The Odds' got a strong reaction. There have been suggestions over the years that people only wanted to hear the classics from the first two albums – and never came to terms with Danny leaving. Well, that wasn't my experience. I loved my time with Molly Hatcher, and 'Beatin' The Odds? I'm proud of it – always have been, always will be."

You know what? He's got every reason. Time to give Jimmy Farrar credence as a fine singer. Time to recognise 'Beatin' The Odds' as among Molly Hatcher's best albums.

**Malcolm Dome,**

*London, February 2008*