

Talented Hiatt creates yet another flawless album

John Hiatt
Slow Turning

Last year, John Hiatt released *Bring The Family*. It is a warm, evocative set of tunes rooted in the concerns of country music — such as family, love and pride — and backed by stellar sidemen like Ry Cooder. It was named one of the best albums of the year by *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times* and *Ap-
plause*, among many others.

On that release, Hiatt's craggy, engaging voice was the center of attention, for he had overcome

personal adversity to reach what would be a highpoint in anyone's career.

On *Slow Turning*, producer Glyn Johns mixes that voice slightly deeper into the mix. The focus now is on the songs — twelve precise, personal numbers — and the results are even more redeeming. Hiatt has wisdom to share and he's never done it more entertainingly.

The album opens with a romp called "Drive South" in which the

singer tries to coax a friend into taking off with him for warmer climates.

"Trudy and Dave" may be a song with a dull chorus, but it has a hilarious story about a couple who rob an automatic teller machine so they can do their laundry.

"Tennessee Plates" is an even funnier tale of a pair of thieves who break into Graceland in search of a Cadillac. After the country schmaltz of "Icy

Blue Heart," the rest of the records simply flawless.

There's also the bouncy "Georgia Rae" (a sweet ode to Hiatt's newborn daughter that will bring a smile to *anyone's* face), the sharp, energetic attack of the title cut and the ominous warning of "It'll Come To You."

These are songs sung by a man who's taken a long, tortuous path to finally arrive at the simple pleasures of wife and family. His honesty and conviction demand your attention, but it's the witty and perceptive lyrics that drive the



message home.

Slow Turning is a pure pleasure, for Hiatt's superb back-up band keeps things bopping along effortlessly. If listeners aren't careful, they might learn something.

By Michael Giltz