

# MOLLY THOMAS AND THE RARE BIRDS

Molly Thomas And The Rare Birds have always been authentic but Thomas and her band have raised the bar on honesty and vulnerability for their new album, “Honey’s Fury”. The southern Alabama foursome amplifies Thomas’ recurring theme of our humanness, connection, and the personal transformation of our chaos and confusion into a raging river of sweet honey. During the four years of creativity that yielded “Honey’s Fury” Thomas has seamlessly woven 12 songs of love, betrayal, destruction, forgiveness, reflection, and healing into a powerfully inspirational album. Thomas effortlessly transforms the depth, range, and complexity of her existence into enlightening learning experiences that are touching and inspirational to her listeners. A notable example is Thank You where Thomas takes us on the wave of emotions surrounding her recent divorce, marital infidelity, and ultimately her path to forgiveness and healing. Her transformative and empathetic touch is most evident here.

Molly Thomas has always been a child of the water and metaphors of flow, movement, tidal change and bodily connection frequently surface in her lyrics. Born in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Thomas has made her home in and cultivated the majority of her musical influences from the southern regions of Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. A hive for songwriters and artists whose emotive storytelling and beautifully gritty swampy swagger personify the region, The south has been the perfect location for Thomas to grow her self-described Indie Swamp Pop.

As a side-person Thomas has recorded and toured internationally, including late night performances on David Letterman and Jay Leno’s Tonight Show with folk icon Todd Snider. Her violin, string arrangements and vocals have been featured on recordings and live performances with Guster, Matthew Ryan and Will Hoge amongst others, and her reputation as a songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and collaborator speaks for itself. Throughout her career, Thomas has released three critically acclaimed records as a solo artist and her music has appeared in films.

Thomas’ current album “Honey’s Fury” is her first with her touring band The Rare Birds and it is a collaborative effort that first took flight with her creative partner and co-producer Rick Hirsch. Guitarist Hirsch, who’s roots are firmly embedded in the Georgia and Alabama music communities, is also a child of the Gulf. Hirsch’s career took off as a founding member of the chart topping southern rock band Wet Willie in the early 70s. In the mid-70s Hirsch recorded and toured with Gregg Allman and Cher on the “Allman And Woman” album, at which time Hirsch relocated to Los Angeles, where he wrote, recorded and performed with many legendary artists and music industry pioneers including Randy Newman, Glynn Johns, Russ Titleman, Tom Dowd, Billy Vera, Fatboy Slim and Joan Armatrading. In addition to many film and television credits Hirsch has

had his songs recorded by Alabama, Tina Turner, Cher, and co-wrote Papa Come Quick (Jody and Chico) for Bonnie Raitt's Grammy nominated "Luck Of The Draw" album.

Like waterways that meander through the land eventually meeting in the Gulf, Rick Hirsch and Molly Thomas were meant to meet, and on many occasions, Hirsch's name was brought to Thomas' attention as a potential collaborator. He had recently returned home from Los Angeles, and right across the bay from Thomas, to Mobile, Alabama to build a recording studio and to develop young artists. Although they had been traveling in the same circles for 10 years they had yet to meet when their paths serendipitously crossed as Hirsch ended up stepping in as a last minute replacement for Thomas' guitar player at a show in Mississippi. Immediately attracted to Thomas's voice, songwriting and "all-around artistic soul", the two artists began a creative partnership in 2015. Their allegiance and attraction to the Gulf cemented a creative bond and the two started to develop a sound that echoed the south. "It's big, swampy and round, with each musician playing an integral role in bringing the songs to life".

One recurring theme in Thomas' songs is connection, whether it be personal or one's relationship to the ever changing physical and emotional environment. The Rare Birds are also intertwined musically and personally. Drummer John Milham first met Thomas when she relocated to Mobile to join his current band Slow Moses.

In the 20 years since the move the two have revolved through each other's lives, for a short time in Slow Moses, as brother and sister-in-law during Thomas' marriage and eventual divorce from Milham's brother, and finally with the first incarnation of The Rare Birds in 2014. Besides being part of the rhythmic tide behind The Rare Birds, John is the band's "peacekeeper" and glue, keeping the band's groove and spirit on course. It was also Milham who introduced bassist John Keuler to Thomas and later brought him into the band. Another local musician, bassist Keuler holds down the bottom end of The Rare Birds and contributes beautiful vocal harmonies behind Thomas. Keuler's melodic bass lines and harmonic contributions are an integral part of the band's lush sound which they have been sharpening on the road for the last four years.

Enter Grammy award winning engineer Trina Shoemaker, best known for her work with Emmylou Harris, Daniel Lanois, Sheryl Crow, The Indigo Girls, Blues Traveler and The Dixie Chicks. Schumacher was working at Dauphin Studios in Mobile, where Honey's Fury was recorded. She had heard the recordings and, after a chance encounter and discussion with Thomas at the supermarket, was enlisted to mix the record. Thomas wanted a lush, rolling, swampy sound, which was similar to Schumacher's signature sound. In yet another serendipitous moment, Schumacher was added to Thomas's team, mixing 11 of the 12 tracks on Honey's Fury.

Molly Thomas is an accomplished career artist with a strong point of view fronting a dynamic and experienced band of musical collaborators. Molly Thomas And The Rare Birds have a dedicated work ethic confirming their honesty and authenticity in every song, and have been hailed by both critics and their contemporaries as an integral and "unfiltered voice" representing the sound of the southern United States.