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August 2009

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2009

[July](#)[June](#)[May](#)[April](#)[March](#)[February](#)[January](#)**ALBUM REVIEW:****The Doobie Brothers (reissue)
The Captain and Me****Warner Brothers/Speakers Corner BS 2694 180g LP**Produced by: **Ted Templeman**
Engineered by: **Donn Landee**
Mixed by: **n/a**
Mastered by: **Kevin Gray at AcousTech**Review by: Michael Fremer
2008-06-01

Speaking personally, I never much cared for this corny West Coast band, particularly this incarnation, featuring lead singer Tom Johnston's high-pitched, quivering and bleating.

Just look at the lame cover art and you know you're into some packaged dreck. The guys dressed in old west outfits atop a horse drawn stage coach below an unfinished freeway ramp. *Heavy!*. Open the gatefold and there they are atop the ramp still dressed in silliness getting ready for a formal meal. *Heavier heaviness!*

Yet there are some classic rock tunes here, like "Long Train Runnin'" and especially "China Grove," though the riff, even back in 1973 was already a horrible cliché. What do song titles like "Dark Eyed Cajun Woman," "South City Midnight Lady," and "Evil Woman" spell other than c-l-i-c-h-e?

Yet look at who's supporting them here: Little Feat's Bill Payne, "Skunk" Baxter (now part of the military industrial complex) and string arranger Nick De Caro. Listening today nothing's changed. This is just plain old "product." Well made, empty "product" but product nonetheless.

One revelation from revisiting this is how strongly Boston's Tom Scholz was clearly influenced by this record. That's about all I got out of the listen.

Since I don't have an original I can't tell you how this reissue cut by Kevin Gray at AcousTech compares to an original, but I found this uncharacteristically edgy-sounding: more about the hard outer coating and less about the soft, chewy center.

Not my thing but if it's yours, you won't find a cleaner, quieter pressing than this Speakers Corner reissue.

Does the passage of time make it easier to listen to the music?

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