

Marianne Faithfull - North Country Maid (1966)

Written by bluelover

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01. *Green Are Your Eyes* (Bert Jansch) - 2:53 02. *Scarborough Fair* (Traditional, arr.Jon Mark) - 3:03 03. *Cockleshells* (Mick Taylor) - 3:13 04. *The Last Thing On My Mind* (Tom Paxton) - 2:12 05. *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* (Ewan MacColl) - 3:53 06. *Sally Free And Easy* (Cyril Tawney) - 2:47 07. *Sunny Goodge Street* (Donovan) - 3:17 08. *How Should I Your True Love Know* (Traditional, arr.Jon Mark) - 1:15 09. *She Moved Thru' The Fair* (Traditional, arr.Jon Mark) - 3:05 10. *North Country Maid* (Traditional, arr.Jon Mark) - 2:32 11. *Lullaby* (Jon Mark) - 2:37 12. *Wild Mountain Thyme* (Traditional, arr.Jon Mark) - 3:33 + 13. *The Most Of What Is Least* - 2:55 14. *Come My Way* (#2) (Jon Mark) - 2:26 15. *Mary Ann* (#2) (Traditional) - 1:56 Personnel: - Marianne Faithfull - vocals - Mike Leander - producer, director - Jon Mark, Mick Taylor – arrangers

Faithfull was still known primarily as a pop singer when she put out *North Country Maid*, but this is in fact very close to a pure folk album, with a bit of influence from pop, rock, blues, and jazz. Largely overlooked even by Faithfull fans, it's actually a quite respectable effort, and probably her best LP (other than greatest-hits compilations) from the time when her voice was still on the high side. Ably backed by sessionmen including guitarists Jon Mark and Jim Sullivan, she interprets mostly traditional material on this record, including "She Moved Through the Fair," "Wild Mountain Thyme," "Sally Free and Easy," and "Scarborough Fair." There are some mid-'60s covers too, though, including Donovan's "Sunny Goodge Street" and Tom Paxton's "Last Thing on My Mind." Sometimes, when the bass gets prominent and the arrangements swing, this isn't too far from early Pentangle, as unexpected as that comparison is. The use of sitar on "She Moved Through the Fair" and "Wild Mountain Thyme" is adventurous, and she sings pretty well throughout, with dignity and purity if not utmost imagination or grit. The 1990 CD reissue on Deram U.K. adds three worthwhile bonus tracks: "The Most of What Is Least" (from a 1965 EP) and alternate versions of "Come My Way" and "Mary Anne" (the originals of which had appeared on her 1965 album, *Come My Way*). --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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