

# Runs in the Family

Teddy Thompson—son of famed British rock legends

Richard and Linda Thompson — knows how to mine his roots. By Mac Randall

Teddy Thompson is the son of storied English folk-rock duo Richard and Linda Thompson, and on his self-titled debut album (Virgin), the 24-year-old singer/songwriter does the family proud. His father is a guitarist's guitarist, whose career began with folk-rockers Fairport Convention in the '60s. He then teamed up with Teddy's mother Linda for a decade that produced five albums.

Teddy's own music combines elegant melodies, witty lyrics and a soulful singing style. The music is an engaging hybrid of pop, rock, country and folk. Fans of artists like Crowded House, Sheryl Crow and John Hiatt will surely want to check him out.

**STS:** Did you ever feel any qualms about getting into music because of the family questions and comparisons with your parents that would inevitably arise?

**Teddy Thompson:** Nope. It was never an issue until other people asked about it in interviews. I suppose it's more interesting for other people than it is for me.

**STS:** I was actually surprised that your dad plays guitar on your album.

**TT:** Finding somebody else to play on the record would have been ridiculous. I would have been trying to find somebody who was second-best. The fact that he's related to me only means I get a better rate.

**STS:** How difficult is it to write songs?

**TT:** Songwriting is definitely a discipline, and I'm not a particularly disciplined

person. I have a problem sometimes buckling down and finishing things, though I'm getting a bit better. I tend to get excited about something, get halfway through it and then move onto something else before I finish. So the hard part for me

is the work aspect. The inspiration's great and the perspiration's painful.

**STS:** The last track on your album is a duet with Emmylou Harris that really brings out the country element in your voice. Has country music been a big influence?

**TT:** I'm a big country fan. I'm not sure why, but it was the first music I ever really loved. When I was 10, the only music I cared about was Hank Williams and the Everly Brothers. But you know, country music is similar to English folk music; it's a lot of the same sentiments and ideas, just in different settings. Perhaps that's why I felt such a natural affinity for country music.

**STS:** "Missing Children," was co-written with Rufus Wainwright, another product of a semi-legendary musical family. How did that come about?

**TT:** We're good friends, and we were just hanging out one night and he had an idea for a song. I think we wrote the first two or three lines and a little bit of the tune—and then we went out and got drunk instead. It was quite a long time

afterwards that I found it again and pieced it together.

**STS:** You live in Los Angeles now, and several songs, especially "So Easy," seem to lampoon the culture of that city. Am I

wrong?

**TT:** No, you're right. "So Easy" is about those unemployed L.A. actors. I've reached my boiling point with Los Angeles; it may be time to move. I could do a whole album about how much I hate L.A. It could be the opposite of the Randy Newman record: "I Hate L.A." It wouldn't get played at Laker games, but if the Lakers played New York, maybe they'd play it then. •

For more on Teddy Thompson, his parents and Fairport Convention, go to [steamtunnels.net](http://steamtunnels.net) and search using keyword "Thompson."

Virgin Records  
Justin Stephens

## Gadgets Guide

### High-Tech Toys: Better Living through Technology

#### Battery-Saver Travel Pak \$49

Having a cell phone is great—until the batteries start running low. But never fear, there's an easy way to recharge without having to use a power outlet. Real Goods ([realgoods.com](http://realgoods.com)) sun-charged cell phone batteries are available! They can be recharged at home, in the car, or in the sun. Add solar power to your conversations.

#### Q-Ball: \$29.95

A high-tech alternative to the classic Magic Eight Ball is here. The Q-Ball ([sharperimage.com](http://sharperimage.com); search for Q-Ball) is

the new crystal ball, answering your questions with over 140 randomly generated responses in different voices and accents along with the appropriate sound effects.

#### CD Shower Companion: \$189.95

Tired of singing a cappella in the tub? A gadget from Sharper Image can help all you wannabe stars. The CD Shower Companion ([sharperimage.com](http://sharperimage.com); search for CD Shower Companion) is a water-resistant CD player designed for the shower. It also has the capability to play TV broadcasts



and has a digital AM/FM Tuner with 10 presets if you want to croon along to the radio while you wash.

#### Genica Portable MP3/CD Player

You've got MP3s, MP3s burned onto CDs and your CD collection, but do you have one player that can play them all? The Genica Portable MP3/CD Player ([genica.com/MP3-CD.htm](http://genica.com/MP3-CD.htm)) can. Not only does the player recognize traditional music in the traditional CD audio format but also plays MP3 files from CD, CD-R and CD-RW. —Kathryn Yu