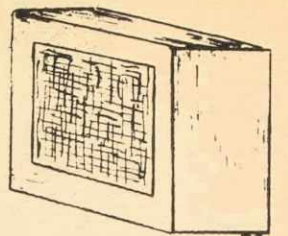


DÉJÀ



ENTENDU



by Bob Hutchings

I have a couple of downer LPs for you this week. I had planned to do Chicago's four LP set — "Live at Carnegie Hall" but, due to copy deadlines, I was unable to preview it. So this week Isaac Hayes and Lighthouse; Chicago next time. ISAAC HAYES — "BLACK MOSES" (ENTERPRISE)

This, Hayes' fifth in Canada, is a two LP set.

If you read TIME magazine you will have noticed the short article on Hayes last month which stated some little known facts about him. It seems he's become a bit of an ego-tripper, appearing on stage in beautiful costumes and throwing Isaac Hayes medallions to the crowds. He owns two Cadillacs, one with gold-plated bumpers. Hayes states that he loves luxury now because he never had it before — which is true. I guess he paid his dues, but there are a lot of others who started the same way and are still paying.

Isaac's new LP is a deluxe package — an elaborate front cover, with Isaac in a long, Israeli-type robe with his hands spread in a "come to me" attitude — all on a cross-shaped poster cover. The other side shows him in chains, the virile bare-chested male thing, along with a life story of Isaac Hayes told in biblical terms (and so it came to pass, etc.).

The Messiah message doesn't come through on the LP though — the songs don't relate to that

idea at all. The album as a whole is a disappointment — another good Isaac Hayes LP, but not great.

"Nothing Takes the Place of You" has a great bass line, a "nice" organ, and a simple drum technique to give this cut something extra. Hayes puts his great voice into good use here on this love ballad.

THE FIRST MEDLEY OF THREE in the set features Hayes in the rap for which he's famous. (Remember "I Stand Accused" or the 18-minute "By The Time I Get to Phoenix"?) In it he talks about problems to a never-answering girl. Then he breaks skillfully into song during this rap, and it still gives me a chill when he does it. It's really beautiful.

"Good Love 6-9969" is the most unusual cut he's produced. It starts with a live segment with much horse-laughing. It's the most funky, soulful cut he's ever done. The Bass is similar to Ray Brown; a choppy guitar adds to the excitement. The vocals also emphasize his ego in this song.

Side 3: Cut 1 is easily the best cut on the LP. "Your Love is So Doggone Good" is the longest and gives him time to dig into his mind. The rap with the crackling voice, with "so good" sung way off in the background by the chorus, and the break into the song by Ike ranks as one of his all time best numbers. Trumpet and violin combine to make this so powerful, you'll just hang your head and fall in to the mood he weaves.

The next cut is a surprise. "For the Good Times", as done by Ray Price, is the best country song I've heard, mostly because it has pure feeling, which country and western doesn't have. It's also more easy-listening than country.

Sorry Isaac, but you can't match Ray Price, even with your soulful voice.

The medley of "Ike's Rap IV" and "A Brand New Me" (the third rap on this LP; the fourth he's called "Ike's Rap") has to be the closest thing to compare to the magnificence of "Your Love is So Doggone Good". This cut has the something to make it great. It really makes me want to cry happy tears. I feel so low along with him at first, but then happy because he's finally found a new love. The voice is so emotion-packed, it's like a soft scream hitting you in the heart and head.

THE FINAL SELECTION, "Going in Circles", was one I wish he didn't end with. A great idea, but not quite pulled off in actuality. He should have ended with "Brand New Me". The cut has merit, though — the way the guitar makes a circular effect is unusual, and the voice is good, except that he sounds weak in the high range of the scale, singing "Strung Out Over You" as the LP fades.

It's unfortunate that there are really long cuts on the LP — he shines on these as in the 17-minute "It's Your Thing" from "Shaft". There he gets a chance to put in the feeling he has (somewhat like Aretha Franklin) with his vocals adding to the scripted words with moans, sighs, and "oh, yeahs", and also with the organ and piano he plays.

His music is hard to define — rock, soul, easy-listening and jazz — and to prove his popularity, he's on all four of these charts in Billboard.

LIGHTHOUSE — "THOUGHTS OF MOVIN' ON" (GRT)

This LP follows the best Canadian LP ever made. Lighthouse's "One Fine Mor-

ning". That was the LP that showed what Canadian talent can do. Lighthouse had a reputation of being lousy on record (as their first 3 LP's on RCA testify) and great live. When they switched to GRT and got some good producers, they showed they were as good on LP as live. The greatest concert I ever saw was their live appearance here a few months ago. They had the guts to sacrifice loudness for a balanced sound (why don't you listen, Grand Funk?)

THIS LP IS VERY GOOD, although it can't match "One Fine Morning". It is much more rock than brass. The guitar predominates here, while the previous LP featured brass comparable (and sometimes exceeding) Chicago and BS and T. Let's face it — an 11 man band is hard to synchronize, but they did it and continue to do so in this LP.

"Take It Slow (Out in the Country)" opens the set with an incredible beginning (that diminishes only slightly during the rest of the song. The brass is clean and the tambourine and vocal add a lot to an excellent cut.

"I'd Be So Happy" with Bob McBride on lead vocals (remember his red skin-tight pants on stage?) is excellent. Typical Lighthouse. Everything clicks, but why are they fading. So many songs on this LP and they can do great tight endings.

"I Just Want To Be Your Friend" is also excellent. The chorus and violin stand out here. The tight ending done with vocals is hard to do well, but it is done well here.

"Rockin' Chair" (dedicated to Crowbar) is incredible! Pure driving, great hard rock with brass adding to the effect. I haven't seen any Canadian group match that guitar. And eleven people all moving on stage is enough to bring anyone to their feet on this cut. The old lady saying, "Ah gee, thanks a lot, Lighthouse" is a fine capper to a fine song.

"Walk Me Down", immediately following the drive of "Rockin' Chair" is a soft religious-type cut that surprises me because they do it so well — and it's so great seeing on stage everything you hear on the record: strings, piano, vibes and harpsicord.

I WISH THEY DIDN'T END this LP with "Insane". It's the weirdest cut I've heard them do. Loud and raucous — not a bad cut but not one to remember the LP by. Good brass and bass but the vocal doesn't strike me right. Also the words "I Can't Believe I'm insane, because I'm sure of my name" don't appeal to me that much. A great rock guitar again makes the cut presentable, but I don't like the ending — it shouldn't fade.

This last cut is a good example of what Lighthouse used to be plagued with — great live and lousy on record. I think they've overcome that. If I remember correctly, all the cuts on this LP were done in the concert too. This group is total Canadian content — music, lyrics, artist and producer. I'm proud to call this band Canadian.

Next week (I hope) — Chicago Live. See you then.

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