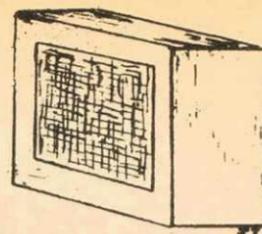


DÉJÀ



ENTENDU



by Hutch

Hi all. This time, two LPs to expand that record collection of which you're so proud. However, I don't think you'll be putting these at the back of your rack and forgetting them. They're relatively new and are good representations of a large musical category.

MARVIN GAYE — "WHAT'S GOIN' ON" (Tamala/Motown)

Supposedly Tamala/Motown is a soul label. It's come a long way — Gaye's LP is just about the most important in the complete history of Mr. Gordy's Detroit empire. On the charts for 32 weeks, "What's Goin' On?" has received critical acclaim (Billboard, Rolling Stone) and buyer approval, too.

For those who link Gaye to Tammy Terrell, he's past that point in music, part of the reason being Tammy's death on stage. That abruptly ended the Smokey Robinson type of Motown he was doing and gave him a lot to think about. When he came out of the depression, he turned to a person that helped him get things together — his father. This man, a

minister, showed him religion as a saving force. That's the essence of Marvin in this LP.

Yes, it's still Motown, because the drums are still beating out rhythm, you're still tapping your foot, and you can still dance to it. But somehow it seems disrespectful to dance the "Funky Chicken" to it. It's Motown, and if you're using it as background or dance music, it's over before you know it.

But here's the bite — the lyrics are great; they're meaningful. The talk of life, love and God's involvement in it go over well, just as in Harrison's "All Things Must Pass". They're both Jesus freaks in a respectful sense, and maybe you can dig what they're into by really listening to this \$6.00 piece of wax.

Marvin's voice is the thread keeping this LP together — it's an instrument he uses well. This brings us back to the fact that it is Tamala/Motown. This must have been a very risky record for them to produce. Thank God people saw the sincerity in it — a true progression in music... Marvin Gaye and Curtis

Mayfield have left Smokey so far behind. One thing this LP is not is good Motown, and maybe it's unfortunate that he's on that label. Maybe he feels he has to conform somewhat and put that often-boring repetitious drum pattern in his music. It doesn't add to the songs and other contemporary music giants don't need it.

THE LONDON HOWLIN' WOLF SESSIONS (Chess)

Blues — gut feeling — Many say blues is just slow rock, but if you take even a shallow look into the roots of modern music in North America and England, you'll probably change your ideas to "Rock is just fast blues", which is more true than the first statement. Even then, there are a lot of blues numbers that are very fast indeed, so you're getting a wide range of music in blues and you're getting a whole lotta blues in this LP.

It's a new Howlin' Wolf (Chester Burnett) album. The back-up is just fantastic: Eric Clapton, renowned as one of the greatest guitarists in the world; Steve Winwood, organist/pianist from Traffic; Bill Wyman and Charlie Watt of the Rolling Stones. Added on selections are names like Ringo Starr, Klaus Voorman and Phil Upchurch. (Originally the Stones were into R&B and idolized artists like Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters.) They've changed since then but I guess Wyman and Watt yearn for those days again.

Five of the 12 cuts on the LP were written by Howlin' Wolf and all but two of the others are by Willie Dixon. That gives you an idea of the type and class of blues being played here.

Howlin' Wolf has the kind of voice you either instantly like or dislike — a hard guttral that makes the songs so much better. It's somewhat like Dylan — many people hate him singing his own songs, but both of these people are fine for me.

The Wolf does all vocals, along with mouth-harp and a

mean acoustic. Clapton on guitar and Winwood on piano are outstanding throughout the LP. Bass and drums (courtesy Wyman and Watt) are standard — great! The harmonica does nothing new but that's still good.

Horns aren't very standard on Howlin' Wolf's blues but they add a lot to "I Ain't Superstitious" and "Built for Comfort".

I'm only dissatisfied with one cut on the LP — "What a Woman". It's too repetitious and isn't saved by Clapton's guitar work near the end. The other 11 cuts are good, with "Red Rooster" and "Highway 49" (Johnny Winter-like guitar) standing out as exceptional cuts.

Also check out the organ, congas and shakers used on "Who's Been Talking". Unusual and done very well. For long time blues fans the recorded rehearsal of "Little Red Rooster" is a delight. The

"inexperienced" new bluesmen argue with the old master, who finally picks up his acoustic guitar and does a fine job on the actual cut.

My only complaint, production-wise, is that 11 of the cuts fade out. I realize that it's a studio and therefore easy to do this, but I'd prefer a standard blues ending.

The Wolf is a master of the slightly vulgar blues, as in "Built for Comfort," "Worried About My Baby" and "Do the Do". The subtle implications are one of his trademarks — a practice later picked up by Led Zeppelin on many of their numbers.

This is a damn good LP, both for those beginners who want an introduction to blues and those connoisseurs who know and love Chester.

Next week — "Meddle" — Pink Floyd and some other as yet unknown LP. Bye.

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