

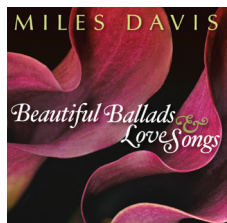
You Up” kicks in, everyone at Arrowhead Pond knows what’s up and clicks in, on cue, to sway and groove with the king of romance. When White recalls that “I’m Gonna Love You Just a Little More, Baby” (a.k.a. his “national anthem”) was first released over three decades ago, the laugh in his voice lets everyone know that no matter how many times he sang it, he still loved the music and loved the audiences who loved it (and made love to it) with him.

In addition to the aforementioned Love Unlimited Orchestra favorites, this totally authentic live album also offers White’s devoted take on Billy Joel’s “Just the Way You Are,” and “Practice What You Preach,” which White co-wrote with fellow sexy soul legend Gerald Levert. *An Evening With Barry White* even offers a bonus track from another performance of “Let the Music Play,” a fitting end by a master whose music will always live on.

—Matt Robinson

BEAUTIFUL BALLADS AND LOVE SONGS

(Columbia/Legacy)



Miles Davis

Miles Davis didn’t just play ballads; he elevated them, proving love songs could be edgy. These well-chosen tracks

by the groundbreaking trumpeter, recorded mostly between 1956 and 1963, are a great intro to the jazz legend. Included are: “Round Midnight,” “I Thought About You,” “Blue In Green,” Cyndi Lauper’s “Time After Time” (from 1985), and Gil Evans’ orchestral arrangement of “My Ship.” These are songs for lovers, loners and dreamers, brooding over the one that got away.



Aretha Franklin

There is only one Queen of Soul: Aretha Franklin. Confident, streetwise and steeped in gospel, blues and jazz, she remains the living gold standard for R&B. Most of these gems

are from Aretha’s successful run on Arista between 1982 and 2003. They include classic tracks written and produced by Luther Vandross (“This Is For Real,” “I Got Your Love”) and Lauryn Hill (“A Rose Is Still a Rose”). Since the title of this CD is *Ballads and Love Songs*, soaring up-tempos like “Freeway of Love” fit. Also included are “Misty” and “Unforgettable,” recorded in the 1960s for Columbia.



Billie Holiday

Lady Day was a pioneering jazz vocalist with a once-in-a-century voice. She inspired singers in many genres, but

nobody sounded quite like her. She lived the life she sang about, made every song count and never sang a tune the same way twice. These selections were recorded between 1935 and 1941 with her own and Teddy Wilson’s orchestras. You can’t go wrong with any of her Columbia reissues (*Lady Day—The Master Takes* was a recent treat). This sampler of early sides includes: “The Very Thought of You” and “You Go to My Head.”



Barry Manilow

Barry Manilow is the Rodney Dangerfield of pop—he gets no respect. However, as musical director during Bette Midler’s

early career, he sure knows his way around a keyboard. This collection sports some of his well-arranged 1970s’ pop hits, then quickly segues into his ’80s and ’90s’ covers of The Great American Songbook. Is “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You” a ’60s’ classic? To fans of the song, I guess. While not a groundbreaker, this CD is for the Manilow fans that don’t have any of his compilations yet.



Frank Sinatra

Influenced by jazz legends Billie Holiday, trombonist Tommy Dorsey, and Mabel Mercer, Frank Sinatra combined

his love for great songwriters and tailor-

made arrangements to master the art of intimate singing. While there are several boxed sets of his Columbia output, this CD is a good place for the new listener to start, as it combines both his Columbia and RCA/Victor sides. It features songs like “Blue Skies” and “Stardust” (recorded with Tommy Dorsey) and his early solo work. Sinatra glides over lush, sensual arrangements by Sy Oliver, Axel Stordahl and George Siravo on “Laura,” “Night and Day,” and “Autumn in New York.”

—Richard Antone



THE LEGENDARY RHYTHM AND BLUES REVUE

Command Performance

(Delta Groove)

Recorded live during the annual Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise, *Command Performance* features Bay Area bluesman Tommy Castro and his regular touring band performing alongside keyboardist Deanna Bogart, J. Geils alumnus Magic Dick and second-generation bluesman Ronnie Baker Brooks. Also appearing are special guests Marcia Ball, Elvin Bishop and Curtis Salgado. Given the extremely impressive list of names on the cover, blues fans purchasing this CD are going to have high expectations. Fortunately, this recording does an excellent job of capturing the energy and excitement of a live blues super-session.

Although there is a hefty dose of instrumental jamming, the extended solos never sound gratuitous or uninspired. “Whammer Jammer” is a no-holds-barred harmonica showcase that lets Magic Dick step into the spotlight. “See You Hurt No More” is an original ballad by Ronnie Baker Brooks that nails the Memphis soul sound. Curtis Salgado handles the vocals on Jimmy Rogers’ shuffle “If It Ain’t Me” and gives a performance that is as gritty and impassioned as anything I’ve heard on his studio recordings. Some high-octane jamming can be heard on the Castro original “High on the Hog”—which features Deanna Bogart trading keyboard riffs with organist Mike Emerson—and a cover of