Billy Fury's greatest hits revived

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Record Review

Billy Fury – his untimely death robbed us of a great talent.

Last month I reviewed the compact disc, The Best of Billy Fury, featuring the 1978 re-recordings of his hit songs on the K Tel lable, and now London Records have released a rival CD containing the originals.

The Billy Fury Hit Parade features his 20 most successful chart hits in their original mono form as they first appeared between 1949 and 1965. This CD is the same collection of tracks that appeared on the LP of the same name in 1982, shortly before Billy's untimely death from a heart attack.

Fury was born Richard Wycherley in 1941 and he began his working life on the Mersey tugboats. As I said in last month's review, I consider him to have been the finest male singer of the 1960s so I find it hard to decide which of these two discs I prefer.

The sound quality on the re-recordings is obviously superior but the originals have more punch and vitality. "The Best Of..." misses off "In Summer" and "Because of Love" – both good songs, but in their place are "Wondrous Place," a fine early hit, and the melodic "Give Me Your Word" which was his last major success. However the remaining 18 tracks on each disc are the same, including great favourites like "I'd Never Find Another You," "When Will You Say I Love You," "Do You Really Love Me Too?" and "In Thoughts Of You" with their irresistible melodies and big orchestral backings. Both discs will therefore occupy a prominent place on my rack.

There have been very few albums released by popular artists so far this year, but this enables me to listen to records I could not find time for last year. These include the "Give Me The Reason" album by Luther Vandross which was actually released in late 1986 but has been a strong performer in the LP chart ever since.

Vandross has been a great favourite with soul music fans ever since he lent his distinctive vocals to Change's 1980 hit "Searchin'", but he enjoyed very little solo success until last summer when "I Really Didn't Mean It" became a hit single. This mid-paced dance tune is easily the best cut on the album but the title song is not far behind.

Another track not to be missed is Luther's interpretation of the Cilla Black hit "Anyone Who Had A Heart" on which he purrs out a soulful performance. There have been several other small hit 45s lifted from the long-player including "Stop To Love," "See Me" and "So Amazing," but my only criticism is that these (and some of the remaining numbers) can sound "samey" and monotonous when played together even though each song is well written and sung.

New albums in the shops this month include "The Isley Brothers' Greatest Hits" featuring 16 of their hits and best-loved songs taken from a 20 year span (including their original version of "Caravan of Love"), and Barry Manilow's "Swing Street" which will probably please his fans but is unlikely to appeal to a wider audience.

The highlight is Barry's duet with Phyllis Hyman on "Black and White" and also some rousing saxophone playing from Stan Getz on the classic Gershwin tune "Summertime".

LP CHART

1 Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D'Arby.
2 Children (The Mission).
3 ive Me The Reason (Luther Vandross).
4 Best of OMD.
5 Whenever You Need Somebody (Rick Astley).
6 Popped In, Souled Out (Wet Wet Wet).
7 Bridge Of Spies (T'Pau).
8 Turn Back The Clock (Johnny Hates Jazz.
9 Unforgettable. (Various).
10.Now and Zen (Robert Plant).

Bob Woodhead

Reduced from A3 → A4.