

Observer Entertainment

Proper insight into Beatles history

Record Review



The Beatles

This month marks the release of two long-awaited Beatles' Compact Discs — "The Beatles' Past Masters Volumes One And Two".

These new compilations complete the collection of the group's output on CD.

The "Past Masters" volumes, together with the 13 Beatles CD studio albums already released in 1987, represent everything that the Fab Four commercially issued during their remarkable reign. These two sets gather together the A and B sides of sin-

gles, special EP tracks, oddities like their two German language recordings, a song recorded primarily for the American market, and another especially donated to a charity album.

However, these songs are certainly not mere "fillers". The two volumes contain no less than 12 million-selling singles, and 11 chart-toppers like "She Loves You", "I Want To Hold Your Hand" and "Hey Jude". The tracks run chronologically, providing a proper insight into the Beatles' seven years of recording activity, and have been gathered together by Mark Lewisohn who has also supplied

comprehensive sleeve notes.

These notes include detailed history and recording dates for each track, and the distinctive black and white packaging also features some lesser known period shots of the quartet. Among the highlights of Volume One are "This Boy" and "Yes It Is" which were B-sides to "I Want To Hold Your Hand" and "Ticket To Ride" respectively. Both songs have superb melodies and three-part vocal harmonies from John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison, and would have been A-sides for almost any other

group. Similarly "I'll Get You" and the B-side of "She Loves You" was a really strong tune.

Lady Madonna

Volume Two includes "Lady Madonna" which in my view was the weakest Beatles single, even though it reached No. 1 exactly 20 years ago and is therefore alternatively available in the 20th anniversary picture-disc single format that EMI are running.

The highpoints on Volume Two include the outstanding No. 1 hits "We Can Work It Out" and "Hey Jude", and a different version of the LP track

"Across The Universe" taken from the World Wildlife Fund charity album of 1969.

The song was actually recorded in February 1968 as a rival to "Lady Madonna" for their March 1968 single. The best new music video is Alexander O'Neal's "The Voice On Video" which is a six-track affair, including his soul ballads "If You Were Here Tonight" and the superb "A Broken Heart Can Mend" from 1986, and his more recent work from 1987.

The upbeat "Fake" was shot in black and white but the film works well, and on "Criticize" Alexander is

surrounded by scores of beautiful women playing in his band, dancing, and watching side-stage. The collection includes his latest song "Never Knew Love Like This" with Cherelle guesting on vocals.

As far as soul albums go, one of the best in the shops at the moment is Regina Belle's "All By Myself" on which she displays a vocal talent that will surely receive much acclaim and great recognition in years to come. The producers she has worked with include Nick Martinelli whose services seem to be in heavy demand these days. The best track is "So

Many Tears", a catchy, mid-tempo tune with brilliant, soulful vocals.

1. Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D'Arby.
2. The Best of OMD.
3. Tear Down These Walls (Billy Ocean).
4. Whenever You Need Somebody (Rick Astley).
5. Unforgettable (Vari-ous).
6. Hearsay (Alexander O'Neal).
7. Popped In, Souled Out (Wet Wet Wet).
8. Turn Back The Clock (Johnny Hates Jazz).
9. Give Me The Reason (Luther Vandross).
10. Who's Better, Who's Best (The Who).

Reduced from A3 → A4.