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Carla Thomas – The Queen Alone – Stax/Speakers Corner

by Audiophile Audition / April 25, 2018 / [Jazz CD Reviews](#)

Queen of Memphis Soul...

Carla Thomas – The Queen Alone – Stax/Speakers Corner #S718 – 180 gm audiophile LP – 1967 *:**



(Carla Thomas – vocals: with backing from Booker T and the MGs, and unknown backing roster of horns and strings)

Carla Thomas was Stax Records answer to the much more heralded crew of Motown female stars. Stax had Carla record with Otis Redding and she

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had hits as well with Rufus Thomas, her father. She deserved the moniker as the Queen of Memphis Soul. Carla had the proper blend of sweetness and sass to fit right in with the funky groove of Stax releases.

Speakers Corner, earlier this year, re-released, *The Queen Alone*, from 1967. With backing from Booker T and the Mgs, the Stax house band, and brass and string accompaniment, Thomas explores a mix of gospel influenced and pop fare of the period. Six of the tracks were written by Isaac Hayes and David Porter of the Stax team.

I found the Side B material to be more assertive and less of an attempt to channel traditional Motown than the Side A material. Her soulfulness is more effective without cloying strings that are utilized to present her as a chanteuse.

The album opens with Burt Bacharach's "Any Day Now." The orchestration drowns out Thomas' vocals. It is followed by "Stop Thief" which is enhanced by some background vocalists to flesh out the lyrics. The upbeat "I Take It to My Baby" is upbeat and percussion driven. Next the ballad, "I Want to be Your Baby" is given a lush treatment with strings.

"Something Good is Going to Happen to You" has a catchy arrangement with some call and response backing vocals. "When Tomorrow Comes" matches a Motown type presentation, quite silky, and the best tune on the A side. The flip side opens with "I'll Always Have Faith in You." It is a straight gospel type ballad arrangement and here, Carla is in her element. "All I See is You" builds up in intensity and its strings add rather than detract. "Unchanging Love" brings to mind Diana Ross, but is more earthy and heart felt.

"Give Me Enough (To Keep Me Going)" utilizes a chamber type echo effect, that brought to mind something that Phil Spector might do, but in a much more scaled down version. "Lie to Keep Me From Crying" makes use of antiphony vocals.

This album seems like an effort from Stax to properly seek out which niche to market their Queen of Memphis soul. With that goal, they are partially successful here.

Tracklist:

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Side A:

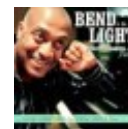
Any Day Now, Stop Thief, I Take It to My Baby, I Want to be Your Baby, Something Good (Is Going to Happen to You), When Tomorrow Comes

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Side B:

I'll Always Have Faith in You, All I See is You, Unchanging Love. Give Me Enough (To Keep Me Going), Lie to Keep Me From Crying

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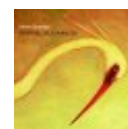
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