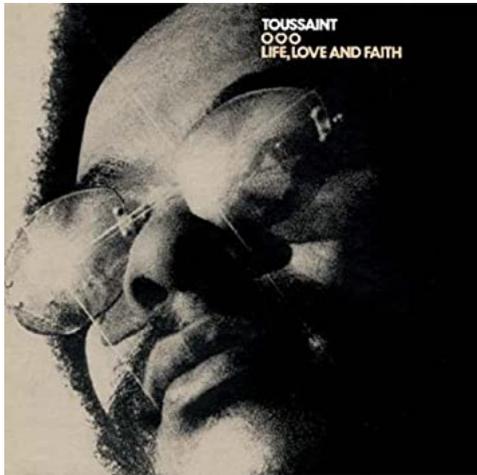


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## Allen Toussaint – Life, Love And Faith – Speakers Corner Records

by [Audiophile Audition](#) | Sep 12, 2021 | [Jazz CD Reviews, SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews](#) | [0 comments](#)



### Allen Toussaint – Life, Love And Faith – Reprise MS 2062 (1972)/Speakers Corner Records (2021) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 38:29 \*\*\*\*1/2;

*Speakers Corner Records releases a vinyl re-master of a quintessential Allen Toussaint album.*

(Allen Toussaint – piano, guitar, harmonica, arrangements; Alvin Thomas – tenor saxophone; Francis Russell – trumpet; Clyde Kerr – trumpet, French horn; George Plummer – guitar; Vincent Toussaint – guitar; Walter Payton – bass; Joe Lambert – drums; Joseph Modeliste – drums plus The Meters)

The legacy of New Orleans music is vast and diverse. Widely considered the birthplace of jazz, this genre evolved with various incorporated styles. In addition to the Southern African-American roots of gospel, there were Cuban, African, Sicilian and classical direction from around the world. Assorted music legends like Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Domino, Sidney Bechet, The Neville Brothers and Louis Prima were proud representatives of the Crescent City. A key component of New Orleans-based music is rhythm & blues. Perhaps the most influential member of the Nola r & b scene was Allen Toussaint. He was a songwriter, arranger and record producer whose songs include "Workin' In The Coal Mine", "Mother-In-Law", and "Southern Nights". Toussaint also produced the hit "Right Place, Wrong Time" for Dr. John and "Lady Marmalade" for Labelle. He became a formidable solo recording artist and was inducted into The *Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame* in 1998, one of numerous prestigious honors.

Speakers Corner Records has released a re-mastered 180-gram vinyl of Toussaint's fourth solo album, *Life Love And Faith*. On this project, he is the center of focus (instead of producing The Meters, they are backing him.). Side A opens with a moody funk number, aided by crisp horn

accents, thick bass and a socio-political message, including imagery of “bible in the hand. It is typical 70's era soul with a repeat chorus. “Am I Expecting Too Much” is wailing soul with layered production, backup vocals and a muscular tenor saxophone. It has gospel inflection and dance vibe. The cohesive, precise arrangement is a staple of Toussaint production. With a combination of *doo wop* and *gospel*, “My Baby Is The Real Thing” epitomizes New Orleans soul. Toussaint adds some compelling piano licks. Driving a hard groove with backbeat, “Goin’ Down” distills street credibility with its cautionary reflection on urban life, framed by hard-edged instrumentals. Toussaint’s soul singing is featured on the foot-stomping “She Once Belonged To Me”. This testimony to love is captured with sultry vocals and multi-textured musical expression. Fronting a bluesier edge, “Out Of The Country (Into Country Life)” is set up with a straight-ahead chord progression and stellar musicianship. The theme of seeking a better life in the country has always been a context in Southern blues and soul music. There is a counterpoint between the rural lament and the modern groove-infused aesthetics.

Side B kicks off with a slower deliberate number, “Soul Sister”. It has a joyful pop resonance, showcasing a call and response with the backup singers. It emulates classic Motown or Memphis “slide” feel. Another relaxed groove infuses the sentimental “Fingers And Toes”. Switching gears, “I’ve Got To Convince Myself” is gritty soul with a jagged electric guitar and tack piano. A *vocalese* interlude and strong horn riffs energize this one. A certain highlight is the blues-laden “On Your Way Down”. The near-mournful translation boasts Toussaint’s best vocal performance. Lines like “... The sun rise, the sun sets...since the beginning, it hasn't changed yet...” are plaintive and speak to the human condition. With electric guitar and harmonica, the laid-back flow is hypnotic. Picking up the pace, “Gone Too Far” is another “finger-waving” admonition, articulated by 70's lingo and a buoyant chorus. The finale, “Electricity” is a pulse-driven opus with complex instrumentation and unusual chord changes.

Kudos to Speakers Corner Records for reissuing this album by veteran New Orleans musician Allen Toussaint.

#### **TrackList:**

*Side A:* Victims Of The Darkness; Am I Expecting Too Much; My Baby Is The Real Thing; Goin’ Down; She Once Belonged To Me; Out Of The City (Into Country Life)

*Side B:* Soul Sister; Fingers And Toes; I’ve Got To Convince Myself; On Your Way Down; Gone Too Far; Electricity.

—Robbie Gerson

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