Ann Peebles

Straight From The Heart

Hi/Speakers Corner SHL 32065

If I had to pick Peebles' best album I am torn between *I Can't Stand The Rain* and this wonderful album. While the title track of *Rain was Peebles* greatest hit, *Heart* edges out that album for uniformity of great songs. Recorded in 1972, this record exemplified how Hi Records had snatched the Memphis soul label crown away from Stax. The death of Stax superstar Otis Redding in 1967 started a decline of Stax's fortunes and by 1975 the label was bankrupt. Hi Records became the Memphis Soul label of the 1970s and this record is one of its finest.

The importance of Hi Records to soul music is obscured today by the contemporaneous rise of Aretha Franklin in nearby Muscle Shoals, Alabama, forever eclipsing Peebles contributions. Yet all you need to do is listen to any one of the cuts on this LP to recognize what a magnificent gift Peebles shared with Aretha and what an outstanding job Al Green did in creating the unique Memphis sound with his Hi Records label. Peebles had the stones to be in your face but also the soul to break your heart. Mastered by Kevin Gray and pressed at Pallas, this record shines as never before. Bravo to Speakers Corner for helping revive the Hi Records label and this great record. **DD**

RECORDING

MUSIC