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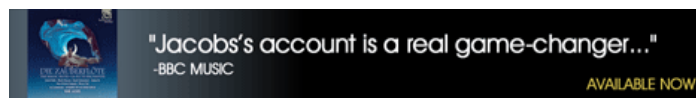
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## Blood Sweat And Tears – Child Is Father To The Man – Columbia Records/Speakers Corner Records – audiophile vinyl

*This brilliant 1968 album is an eclectic masterpiece.*

Published on March 02, 2011



### Blood Sweat And Tears – Child Is Father To The Man – Columbia Records/Speakers Corner Records (180 gram audiophile vinyl) CS 9619 \*\*\*\*\*:

(Al Kooper – piano, organ, keybards, vocals; Steve Katz – guitars, lute, vocals; Fred Lipsius – piano, alto saxophone; Randy Brecker – trumpet, flugelhorn; Dick Halligan – trombone; Jerry Weiss – trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals; Jim Fielder – bass; Bobby Colomby – drums; plus others)

The freewheeling ambiance of the Sixties was influential in the exploration of musical directions. Fresh from the iconic sessions with Bob Dylan, keyboardist, vocalist and arranger Al Kooper had a vision. He wanted to combine various styles of play to enhance rock music. At the core of this idea was the addition of complex horn charts. The template of the Blues Project (the former group of Kooper and Steve Katz) was reconfigured to reflect a union of cultural embodiment. A diverse group of artists was assembled, and in the fall of 1967, Blood Sweat And Tears entered the studio to record.

*Child Is Father To The Man* (released in 1968) is a groundbreaking album in its sheer audacity. Combining elements of rock, soul, blues and even classical music, the band creates a proprietary genre. The opening track, "Overture" is stunning. A twelve-piece string section blasts through a thematic preamble in ninety-two seconds. A crazed laugh accompanies the anthem-like structure, bringing an enigmatic context. The following number ("I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know"), arranged by Kooper and producer John Simon (strings), is widely regarded as one of the greatest rock/blues songs of all time. A soulful horn chorus, distorted electric guitar (Steve Katz) and celestial vocal backing (Valerie Simpson, Melba Moorman) provide a sharp edge to this modern blues treatment. However, the lead vocals by Kooper are indicative of his affinity for urban angst ("I could be president of General Motors, baby..."). The screams at the end pay homage to fellow sixties trendsetter, Janis Joplin. Another original composition, "I Can't Quit Her" is a swaggering funky arrangement that combines rocking piano chords, strings, horns and tight band dynamics. Rather than posturing standard blues covers, a new take on the idiom emerges. Kooper does not possess a brawny voice, but he can sing the blues. His wailing on "Somethin' Goin' On" (accentuated by R&B call and response, and organ grooves) is testament to that. Additionally, the utilization of big band jazz signatures is invigorating, as performed by this superior aggregation.

On a different note, "The Modern Adventures Of Plato, Diogenes And Freud" resurrects the pizzicato elements of the BS&T String Ensemble in a striking duet with voice.

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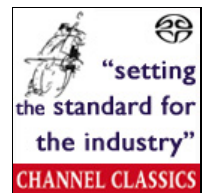
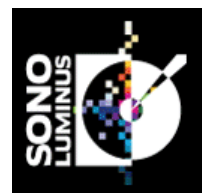
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Equally uncanny is the psychedelic "House In The Country", replete with cricket noises and beatnik references. At the heart of Blood Sweat And Tears is the connection to jazz. With a Latin-tinged version of Harry Nilsson's "Without Her", Randy Brecker (flugelhorn) and Fred Lipsius (alto saxophone) exchange robust solos. Brass proclivity brings gospel fervor to "Just One Smile" (Randy Newman) and "So Much Love/Underture" (Goffin/King). There is a tenuous character in the adaptation of Tim Buckley's "Morning Glory", but it blends with the "go for broke" spirit of the project.

As if on cue, Al Kooper would be "dismissed" from Blood Sweat And Tears. Ironically, the next album (with some Kooper arrangements on it) would feature a conventional lead singer and earn a Grammy for Best Album. However, few groups would approximate the innovative panache of Child Is Father To The Man. The freaky album cover, with the musicians holding life-like puppets of their likeness, captures the uninhibited bravado of that era. Speakers Corner Records has meticulously reproduced this vinyl masterpiece. The separation of the multi-layered acoustics is striking. Also, the singular tonality of the instruments is clear in the mix. This is still an important achievement.

**TrackList:** Overture; I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know; Morning Glory; My Days Are Numbered; Without Her; Just One Smile; I Can't Quit Her; Meagan's Gypsy Eyes; Somethin' Goin' On; House In The Country; The Modern Adventures Of Plato, Diogenes And Freud; So Much Love/Underture

-- Robbie Gerson

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