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Various Artists

Adam Lambert & Steve Cooke - The Paramount Sessions

Review by G. W. Hill

Whenever an artist gets a big name, old recordings (if they exist) show up on offer. Such is the case here. These recordings of Adam Lambert and Steve Cooke were recorded before Lambert became a household name. I haven't really heard Lambert's solo stuff released since he became famous, but I'm betting this isn't the same kind of music. Also, apparently this was released previously under a different title. Still, the pop rock sounds of this (recorded with Madonna's back up band) works pretty well. It tends to be a bit "samey" at times, but both Lambert and Cooke do a nice job on the vocals.



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Track by Track Review

Disc 1 Adam Lambert

Climb



Here's a pop tune that's catchy and more of an alternative rock based pop music. There are hints of gospel on this. There's an extremely tasty guitar solo on this tune.

Want

Keyboards and a soulful vocal performance open this. It builds out with other instrumentation joining. Overall it keeps the cool alternative pop sound in place. I like this number a lot. There are some awesome vocal sections later with a lot of passion coming through on the delivery.

Fields

This one is, perhaps, closer to the opening song. Again, it's the vocal performance that makes this special. I particularly like the section later with the non-lyrical vocals.

Under The Midday Sun

Here have a song that's basically a powerfully arranged ballad. While it might not be as strong as some of the rest of the music here, it's quite captivating. Parts of it do move towards progressive rock just a bit.

Castleman

The overall musical concept hasn't changed a lot here. This is a mellow rock tune that leans along the lines of balladic music. It's a good tune, but doesn't really stand taller than the rest of the stuff here. I do like the section that ends it, though. It's got an almost soaring progressive rock texture to it.

Did You Need It

Here's a pretty and potent ballad. This cut might not be a big change in terms of style, but it's one of the strongest pieces here.

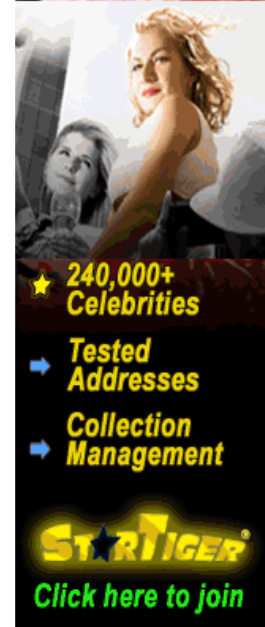
Wonderful

With a slightly progressive rock based arrangement, this is another that's more or less balladic. It's also strong.

More Than

A slow tempoed tune, this is dramatic and quite potent. I like it a lot.

Hour Glass



This is a good piece of music. Unfortunately, by this point in time, it's all starting to sound the same.

Light Falls Away

The final cut of this first disc is more of a rock number. It's still a bit too much like the rest of the material, meaning it doesn't really stand out. Although, the extended instrumental section near the end of the cut brings this into a realm that's not far removed from progressive rock and works really well.

Disc 2 Steve Cooke

Radio

The opening bit of this feels like it might be about to launch out into a 1980s hair metal jam. Instead, it works towards pop rock that's more in keeping with the music heard on the first disc. I love the retro keyboard sounds on this and there's a definite soulful element to the whole number. It's quite a strong piece.

Gravity

Here's a dramatic number that falls into the general territory of the rest of the disc. It's got both dramatic vocal and musical arrangements.

What If This Was All

A powerful melodic rock tune, this has a lot of links to the music of the 1970s. The only problem is, by this point in the set, it's all starting to feel a bit monolithic.

For Cello

Somewhat progressive rock oriented, this pop rock tune is again too much like the rest of the album. That's too bad because taken by itself it's one of the strongest tunes here. The guitar soloing near the end of this is especially noteworthy.

Openwater

There is a bit of a country flavor to this piece. It's more like the way the Rolling Stones sometimes touch on country, though. In fact, the vocals at times feel like Mick Jagger. This manages to stand above the rest a bit. It's also rather soulful later.

Colder

The synthesizer sound that opens this makes it feel like it might be progressive rock. It's taken to more of a pop rock sound from there. The vocals get quite powerful later and there's a tasty guitar solo.

Sway

This is basically a pop rock ballad. It's not bad, and by itself would be strong. It's just too much like the rest.

Lover

Another pop balladic number, this one also has some Rolling Stones leanings on the vocals. It's a good tune, and one of the standouts on the set.

The Lasting Time

This ballad is pretty, but suffers from being too "samey."

Almost Home

I like this melodic rock tune a lot, but it definitely loses a lot of its charm from the positioning amongst so much similar music. It's actually one of the strongest songs here.



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