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Shared Darkness
A Communal Life in Film and DVD, Examined



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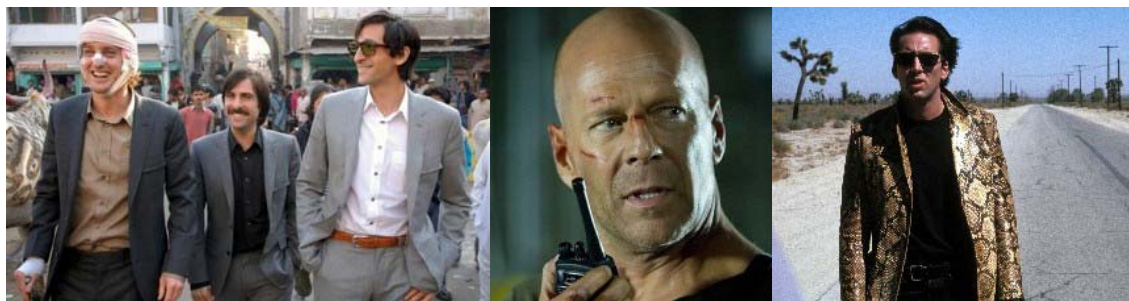
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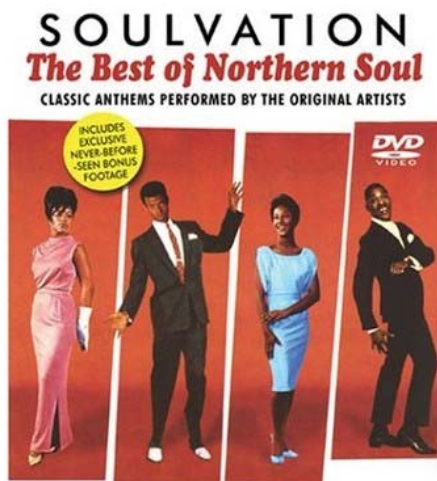
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Soulvation: The Best of Northern Soul



This entry was posted on 6/17/2007 11:50 PM and is filed under [DVD Reviews](#).



One of the interesting things about the music of yesteryear is **just how many one-time chart toppers sort of slid off the face of the Earth**. For them, there was no celebratory VH-1 *I Love the '80s* series, or snarky fan web sites dedicated to sarcastically keeping the flames of Sydney Barnes or Matthew Hapnard alive. R&B, rock 'n' roll... they each had their hot-risers who stand (or more aptly lay) in total obscurity today, but perhaps none so much as the soul scene, which put artists and church-trained crooners through the wringer like so much grist through the mill.

The performance compilation DVD *Soulvation*, concentrating ostensibly on the regional speciality of Northern soul, attempts to rectify some of that anonymity, collecting 20 anthems from the underground dance music scene, each performed by their legendary (and in some cases not-so-legendary) artists. Its play list is as follows: Frank Wilson's "Do I Love You," Bob Brady and the Con Chords' previously unreleased "Everybody's Goin' To the Love-In," top-shelf belter Brenda Holloway's "Reconsider" (a real stand-out), Kim Weston's "Helpless," Edwin Starr's "I Have Faith in You," Sandi Sheldon's "You're Gonna Make Me Love You," Leon Haywood's "Baby Reconsider," The Artistics' previously unreleased "Hope We Have," Richard Temple's "That Beatin' Rhythm," the aforementioned Barnes' "I Hurt on the Other Side" (once put to good use by Spike Lee), JJ Barnes' "Our Love Is in the Pocket," The Gems' "I'll Be There," Lee Andrews and the Hearts' "Nevertheless," The Carstairs' enervated "It Really Hurts Me Girl," Evie Sands' "Picture Me Gone," The Platters' "With This Ring," Jackie Ross' "Selfish One," Betty Lavette's "Let Me Down Easy," Pat Lewis' "No One to Love" and Tobi Legend's "Time Will Pass You By." As a grab-bag title, *Soulvation* more or less succeeds, but it's obviously got niche appeal; for me, only about a quarter of the tunes connected in lasting fashion.

Housed in a regular Amray case, *Soulvation* is presented on a region-free disc in 1.33:1 full screen, with a Dolby 2.0 stereo audio mix that is certainly

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adequate if not mind-blowing. The video quality of its footage varies a bit, but most is solid considering the sources and time of its recording. Overall, the title runs 70 minutes, padded out a bit with interview footage, though some academic overview would definitely have been welcome, particularly given the missing-in-action nature of some of the included acts. **C+ (Concert) C- (Disc)**

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