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Martha Reeves



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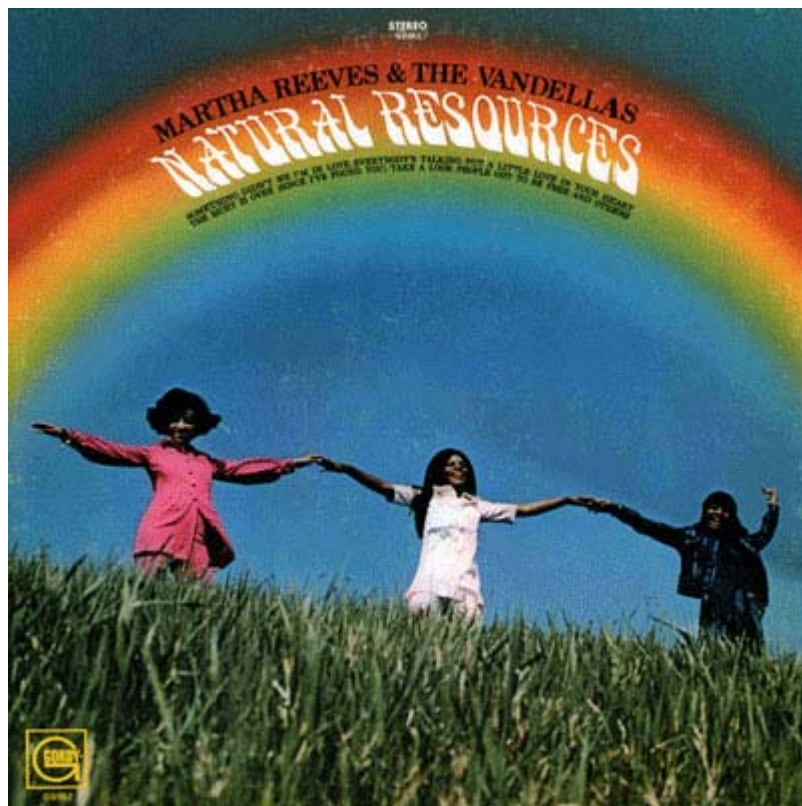
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I don't know exactly what retrospective or special it was pegged to, but "Dancing in the Street" set my feet and soul on collective fire when I first heard it memorably blaring from the tube as a kid. It would be a half decade or more on when I would more deeply immerse myself in Motown and the music of that era, but **Martha Reeves' big, brassy vocals and the inviting blare of that saxophone were a thing to behold.** The song remains an undeniable up-tempo hit (it'll likely get covered on *American Idol* this season, if it hasn't already), and if it fails to lift a sour mood for at least two-and-a-half minutes then one is certifiably one hardcore grump.

No surprise, then, that it's that tune that serves as **the kick-off treat and centerpiece to this concert disc** (it's actually performed twice). But Reeves was no one-hit wonder. Her act, Martha and the Vandellas, were one of Motown Records' earliest and most exciting girl groups — **a more and edgy forceful alternative to the airy lift of the Supremes.** Their first hit was their second release, a beat ballad called "Come Get These Memories" that represented Holland-Dozier-Holland's first collaboration as a songwriting team, hit #3 on the R&B charts in 1963. **Other smashes soon followed, including "Jimmy Mack," "Heatwave" and, of course, the finger-snapping "Nowhere to Run To,"** another romp of a song.

All of these tunes get a workout in this **54-minute showcase, recorded from a 2005 show at the Rock 'n' Roll Palace in Orlando, Florida.** Reeves is older and the arrangements thusly stretched out just a bit from the full-throttle pace of the originals. Still, if her attempts at energetic reach-out don't convey the full-on catharsis one might want (sorry, but

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tambourines don't fully convey the will to move that "Dancing in the Street" instills), Reeves proves she still has some power left in her pipes. Special guest Sam Moore also comes out to offer up some of his hits ("Hold On, I'm Coming," "Wrap It Up, I'll Take It") as well, which leads to the nice conclusion of "Soul Man," another energetic tune. There aren't any special features to speak of on this full-frame, region-free presentation, but the audio is loud and clear, and as long as one supplies their own dance moves, it's a nice enough treat from Motown's star-studded past. **B (Concert) C+ (Disc)**

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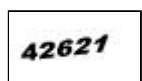
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