Dr. John – Babylon (1969)

1. "Babylon" – 5:25 2. "Glowin'" – 5:39 3. "Black Widow Spider" – 5:01 4. "Barefoot Lady" – 3:10 5. "Twilight Zone" – 8:15 6. "The Patriotic Flag / Waiver" – 4:52 7. "The Lonesome Guitar Strangler" – 5:34 Dr. John - keyboards, vocals

Dr. John's ambition remained undiminished on his second solo album, Babylon, released shortly after the groundbreaking voodoo-psychedelia-New Orleans R&B fusion of his debut, Gris-Gris. The results, however, were not nearly as consistent or impressive. Coolly received by critics, the album nonetheless is deserving of attention, though it pales a bit in comparison with Gris-Gris. The production is sparser and more reliant on female backup vocals than his debut. Dr. John remains intent on fusing voodoo and R&B, but the mood is oddly bleak and despairing, in comparison with the wild Mardi Gras-gone-amok tone of his first LP. The hushed, damned atmosphere and after-hours R&B sound a bit like Van Morrison on a bummer trip at times, as peculiar as that might seem. "The Patriotic Flag-Waiver" (sic), in keeping with the mood of the late '60s, damns social ills and hypocrisy of all sorts. An FM underground radio favorite at the time, its ambitious structure remains admirable, though its musical imperfections haven't worn well. To a degree, you could say the same about the album as a whole. But it has enough of an eerie fascination to merit investigation. --- Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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