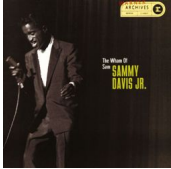


Sammy Davis – The Wham Of Sam (1995)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 24 September 2011 18:32 - Last Updated Saturday, 18 April 2015 14:39

Sammy Davis – The Wham Of Sam (1995)



1. *Lot of Livin' to Do* 2. *Begin the Beguine* 3. *My Romance* 4. *Too Close for Comfort* 5. *Soon* 6. *Falling in Love With Love* [play](#) 7. *Thou Swell* 8. *Can't We Be Friends?* 9. *Guys and Dolls* 10. *Blame It on My Youth* 11. *Let There Be Love* 12. *Bye Bye Blackbird*
[play](#)

□

Personnel includes: Sammy Davis, Jr. (vocals); William Hood, Bud Shank, Bill Perkins (reeds); Jack Sheldon, Al Porcino, John Audino (trumpet); Vincent DeRosa (French horn); Stu Williamson (trombone); Red Callender (tuba); Joe Mondragon (bass).

The figure of Sammy Davis Jr. is an important one in American pop-culture; however, today we frequently only recall his image as a flamboyant Rat-Packer with a glass eye. A listen to this CD will restore this legendary performer's legacy.

THE WHAM OF SAM reveals an exceptional set of skills. "Thou Swell" and "Falling in Love With Love" are roller-coaster rides of tempo twisting phrasing. "Begin the Beguine" is stunning, as Davis takes on Cole Porter's difficult composition without instrumental assistance. "Bye Bye Blackbird" finds him showing off his range, from high notes to low and from wailing to crooning. Sammy Davis Jr. was a singer of tremendous talent with a jazz-influenced approach. Sensitive to the songs despite his firecracker style, Davis's place in the pantheon of American entertainment is confirmed by these tracks. ---cduniverse.com

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Not to be confused with the 1961 Reprise album of the same name, the 1994 Sammy Davis, Jr. reissue *The Wham of Sam!* brings together the prime cuts of the artist's early-'60s collaborations with arranger Marty Paich and his Dek-Tette. The combination of Davis' varied and rhythmically sophisticated vocal delivery and Paich's involved yet very swinging arrangements produce consistently high quality performances over the 12 tracks here. Unfortunately, these sessions would not set the pace for Davis' subsequent output, as he opted to satisfy the record industry's hunger for one-dimensional pop covers instead. On *The Wham of Sam* sessions, Paich was following up on his justly famous Dek-Tette recordings with a singer more successful at transcending pop trends, Mel Torme. Davis, though, found his own voice by the late '50s, and Paich spotlights the mature style here by playing to his unerring sense of rhythm and fine ballad phrasing. On both "Too Close for Comfort" and "Falling in Love With Love," the artist deftly glides in and out of fast tempo changes without compromising his Torme-like elastic phrasing. He does justice to some well-worn ballads as well, with his renditions of "My Romance," "Soon," and "Blame It on My Youth" ably demonstrating his wide vocal range amidst the unfettered support of Paich's economical arrangement. "Can't We Be Friends" and "Bye Bye Blackbird" turn a bit noir-ish, as Davis' loping and smoldering voice glide above the nocturnal pulse of Joe Mondragon's walking bass. *The Wham of Sam!* could well be the one Sammy Davis, Jr. collection which spotlights practically all his many vocal talents, so both new fans and old should have this one in their collection, not least of all for the somewhat rare chance to hear how the artist could shine with stellar backing and top-drawer arrangements. --- Stephen Cook, allmusic.com

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