

Laura Nyro and Labelle - Gonna Take A Miracle (1971)

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1 I Met Him On A Sunday 1:50 2 The Bells 2:59 3 Monkey Time/Dancing In The Street 4:54 4 Desiree 1:50 5 You've Really Got A Hold On Me 4:05 6 Spanish Harlem 2:52 7 Jimmy Mack 2:55 8 The Wind 2:54 9 Nowhere To Run 5:03 10 It's Gonna Take A Miracle 3:23
Laura Nyro – vocals, piano Norman Harris, Roland Chambers – guitar
Lenny Pakula – organ Ronnie Baker – bass Larry Washington, Nydia Mata - congas, bongos
Vince Montana – percussion Nona Hendryx, Patti Labelle, Sarah Dash – vocals Jim Helmer - drums

With the 1971 release *Gonna Take a Miracle*, pop composer and vocalist Laura Nyro completed her four-album/four-year deal for Columbia. Nyro's passion for R&B can be traced back to some of her earliest compositions, such as "Wedding Bell Blues" and "Stoned Soul Picnic" -- both of which were covered by the R&B vocal quintet the Fifth Dimension. More recently, her version of "Up on the Roof" was one of the highlights of *Christmas and the Beads of Sweat*. So, enthusiasts who had paid any attention at all to the course of Nyro's career would not have been surprised by her direction on this project. As much as *Gonna Take a Miracle* is indeed a Laura Nyro album, it could likewise, and perhaps more accurately, be described as a collaborative effort between Nyro and the female soul trio LaBelle -- featuring Patti LaBelle, Nona Hendryx, and Sarah Dash -- as well as producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. It is ultimately this team that is responsible for the album's overwhelmingly solid results. Leading off in an apropos style is a succulent cover of the Shirelles hit "I Met Him on a Sunday." The vocal performance is structured as a round -- with each woman singing a consecutive line. The song is rightfully returned to the street corner doo wop tradition from which it originated with the simplicity of unadorned vocals creating an inconspicuous a cappella symphony. Nyro has never sounded so comfortable, easy, or "in her element" than she does backed by an all-star Philly soul ensemble that Gamble and Huff assembled for these sessions. The material reaches beyond just the sounds of Philadelphia, with Motown ("You've Really Got a Hold on Me" and "Nowhere to Run") and Brill Building ("Spanish Harlem"), as well as lesser-known covers of the Charts' "Desiree" and the Baltimore-based Royalettes "It's Gonna Take a Miracle." ---Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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