

## MUSIC REVIEW: Great American Soulbook by Tower of Power

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Holland, MI —

Thirty-nine years and 18 albums later finds Tower of Power perhaps at the peak of their form ... and then some. With about 60 personnel changes in their lineup from the start it's just about even money that some founding members are more about playing shuffleboard and trading "medicine cabinet" stories than blasting out some of the finest jazz/funk/soul to grace the airwaves.

This current effort existing primarily of "cover versions" of classic tunes receives a freshening via the importation of some of the finest musicians of the current musical stage. Joss Stone, Sir Tom Jones, Huey Lewis and even Sam Moore lend extremely cohesive contributions to the tunes corralled here.

The "Godfather of Soul" Mr. James Brown himself is given his due in a homage titled "Star Time" which is a nod to founding member Emilio Castillo's having started the group after being inspired by the "Hardest Working Man in Showbusiness". The old Sam and Dave classic gets reworked here with the addition of Sir Toms "pipes" and seriously does justice to the song. Joss Stone duets on "It Takes Two" and more than belts it out, she OWNS the tune.

Speaking of Sam and Dave, Mr. Sam Moore himself steps in to give the Otis Redding classic "Mr. Pitiful" his own terrific tenor touch and does so quite nicely thank you. Joss gives an encore performance on the sweet and sexy "Your Precious Love" with a vocal to bring a tear to your eye and warmth to the coldest heart.

Huey Lewis's contribution to the proceedings in the form of "634-5789," a song originally performed by Wilson Pickett who would probably give a high five for this effort and shows why both vocalists were extremely successful.

Bringing an end to the festivities is a cover of the Bill Withers offering "Who Is He(And What Is He To You)" and couldn't end things on a higher note. Having been born out of Bill Grahams San Francisco Records, and indeed the band's hearts could have been left there, but their abilities were inspired straight out of Motown. Enduring.