

GREAT AMERICAN SOULBOOK  
TOWER OF POWER RECORDS  
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By: Susan Haller

Having an early copy of the CD "Great American Soulbook" is like being a kid with a super hero lunch box full of cool stuff for "Show and Tell". All the way to school you smile knowing that each and every thing you pull from that box is going to be magical for the audience.

If you can carve out the time, I actually recommend that you listen to this music straight on, concert style and get ready to be entertained. The singers are all fabulous, there is no better vocalist than Larry Braggs, impeccable pitch and diction. Enough energy to light the Luxor beam for an evening, "love him", especially when he is in cahoots with Sir Tom Jones in a great "let's have a singing contest" re-make of "I Thank You". End results... We are all big winners! The first duet on the cd is spectacular and the next and the next and the next.

In the live "Vegas" show, the band was thrilled with their amazing "girl singer" collaboration and they were right. Joss Stone comes out of the lunchbox for some beautiful vocal tango. Plenty of great cross over, with a few circles of tender intimacy, she catches the vibe of the tunes early on, and isn't afraid to flaunt herself in front of a very receptive crowd. She does because she knows she can.

At his soul/blues best, Sam Moore puts his heart into "Mr. Pittiful" and does, indeed sound just as forlorn as the song suggests. We join right in and start to feel "Pitiful" too. In that toe tappin, face smilin', feel good, blues kinda fashion. "What makes a man feel so blue, when we feel so darn good? It's just the nature of things..."

Larry Braggs is especially effective on "Heaven Must Be Missing an Angel", his voice is perfectly blended against an often underappreciated group of musicians, the back up singers. Believe me, these wonderful singers are totally "on it" for the whole experience. It was obviously amazing in the studio, just to watch an incredible talent like Joss Stone work, knowing that your input is going to allow her performance to be even better. Well done, truly well done.

With his chops all the way in shape for "634-5789", Huey Lewis is definitely a great way to spend a few minutes remembering the one whose number you'll never forget. We all have somebody like that, or at least we should. This song is where the band pulls out the Hammond B-3 and we take a nice long ride with Roger Smith, master keyboard man. Ah yes, finally... the Band

I don't believe there is a tune on the whole album that didn't drive me to my knees, the place where my hands could tap out the beat and keep time along with the guys that are playing instruments of heaven. The arrangements both flawless and powerful at the same time have

great dimension in the combinations and manner in which the layers come at us like hot apple pie... warm and delicious.

Tower of Power is never afraid of big sounds, big voices, and showcasing spectacular solo work within the arrangements. Emilio Castillo and George Duke take us on the well planned adventure, doing what they were born to do. From the Chicago rain café ballad, "Me and Mrs. Jones" to the "Wake up and smell the attitude" of "You Met Your Match", This music will have you, and your loved ones dancing around the kitchen and nodding your head in the car, knowing that this music will bring about a lifetime of new conversation. Fabulous!

Emilio Castillo	Second Tenor Sax
Stephen ("Doc") Kupka	Baritone Saxophone
Francis Rocco Prestia	Bass
David Garibaldi	Drums
Larry Braggs	Lead & Background Vocals
Roger Smith	Keyboards
Tom E. Politzer	First Tenor Sax & Alto Sax
Adolfo Acosta	Second Trumpet, Flugelhorn
Michael Bogart	Lead Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Trombone
Mark Harper	Guitar