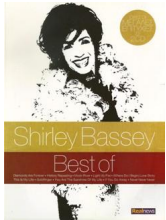


Shirley Bassey - Best Of (2012)

Written by bluelover

Thursday, 02 August 2012 17:07 - Last Updated Monday, 17 July 2017 13:19

Shirley Bassey - Best Of (2012)



CD1: 01 – *Diamonds are forever* 02 – *History repeating* 03 – *Big spender* 04 – *Kiss me honey honey* 05 – *Moonraker* 06 – *Something* 07 – *For all we know* 08 – *Never never never* 09 – *Light my fire* 10 – *I who have nothing* 11 – *Where do I begin* 12 – *As I love you*

CD2:

01 – *This is my life* 02 – *Goldfinger* 03 – *You are the sunshine of my life* 04 – *Fly me to the moon* 05 – *I get a kick out of you* 06 – *Love is a many splendored thing* 07 – *The liquidator* 08 – *Moon river* 09 – *Natali* 10 – *If you go away* 11 – *No regrets* 12 – *What kind of fool am I*

After 2007's patchy, Grandma-with-a-ringtones album *Get the Party Started*, *The Performance* is a return to what Bassey does best: sweeping, orchestral overstatement. This collection is also contemporary, but instead of resorting to Mark Ronson or other remixers du-jour, she mines the talents of a collection of disparate, yet established songwriters.

The turned-to-11 string arrangements could fuel space travel, so there is little room for restraint. Given Bassey's three Bond themes, it is fitting that the current 007 soundtracker, David Arnold, is producer/arranger here. John Barry even hands her his first song since *Diamonds Are Forever* – shame it's not as good, but then what is? The collaborations gel neatly with Arnold's production, particularly an unlikely Kaiser Chiefs' contribution, which resists a Bassey Britpop vocal about shoplifting and is surprisingly Bond-ish. It's certainly superior to recent under-written themes, even if *I Love You Now* will struggle to find a suitable villain.

Another highlight is Rufus Wainwright's flamenco-esque *Apartment*, where Bassey finds the skip of a woman half her age. However, Gary Barlow's contribution does little to stem his slide

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into music so polite it should now be excused.

It's easy to forget, with the avalanche of indie sixth-formers wishing to share their worldly wisdom, the value of well-earned lines such as the shimmering "Now, I'm not quite so young / I'm not quite so foolish in my defence" sung by a 72-year-old, although adding "I'm not your girl..." may be pushing it.

There is a midway lull, with *As God Is My Witness* meandering so idly one sympathises with the big fellow. Surprisingly, things are saved by Manic Street Preachers' wistfully autobiographical *The Girl From Tiger Bay*, which echoes Bassey's turn on Propellerheads' *History Repeating*, while Pet Shop Boys continue their healthy track record of writing for female icons with the defiantly fragile title track.

Admirably shaking away cruise-ship shtick, Bassey wraps herself around these songs with gusto, meaning that perhaps, for once, mum's Christmas present will find a place on the family stereo. --- Tom Hocknell, BBC Review

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