

Simply Red - Picture Book 1985

Written by bluelover

Thursday, 16 February 2012 09:45 - Last Updated Saturday, 29 July 2017 11:54

Simply Red - Picture Book (1985)



01. *Come to My Aid* [4:01] 02. *Sad Old Red* [4:29] 03. *Look at You Now* [3:00] [play](#) 04. *Heaven* [4:31] 05. *Jericho* [5:59] 06. *Money's Too Tight* [4:10] 07. *Holding Back the Years* [4:29] 08. *Red Box* [3:55] 09. *No Direction* [3:38]

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10. *Picture Book* [5:45]

Personnel: Tony Bowers - Bass Ian Dickson - Sax (Tenor) Francis Foster - Conga David Fryman - Guitar, Vocals Chris Joyce - Drums, Percussion Tim Kellett - Trumpet Fritz McIntyre - Keyboards, Vocals Ronnie Ross - Sax (Baritone) Sylvan - Guitar Mick Hucknall - Vocals

Has it really been over 30 years since the world was introduced to Mick "Red" Hucknall and his mates? Darn my math. This impressive debut LP of theirs took us all by surprise, somewhat of an overnight sensation for a band that had only existed for a year or so at the time of its release. It was, and still is, well-planned in its variety of tempo, well-executed in its playing and production, and alternately fun, funny, and moving.

Here in the states, our first notice was the massive hit single "Holding Back the Years." Coming from the long tradition of U.K. bands who were essentially Ameriphiles musically, this exquisite ballad with the jazzy touches and fiery, soulful vocal took everybody by surprise. The followup in America was the perfect changeup, the funky "Money\$ Too Tight (To Mention)," one of two covers of U.S. numbers in the set. As the album began to fly off the shelves, those looking for more of the jazz couldn't have been disappointed with the Sinatra-esque "Sad Old Red," while the funk fans found another fave with the opening track, "Come to My Aid." Wisely leaving the fans wanting more, the hypnotic title track closes this terrific debut effort with gospel touches like a keyboard mimicking an angelic choir, following which the monk-like backing vocals chant "We beseech thee."

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To the 21st century ear, there are of course the moments that smack of '80s synth excess, such as on the intro to "Come to My Aid," but these don't usually overwhelm, and performing the Talking Heads' tune "Heaven" as a bluesy kind of dirge will never make me forget the airy original, but by and large this was a stellar debut. While it's always difficult to predict where an opening salvo like this will lead career-wise, this is one band whose obvious promise was far from just another flash in the pan. ---Brian Hulett, allmusic.com

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