

Simple Red – 25 The Greatest Hits (2008)

Written by bluelover

Tuesday, 13 October 2009 21:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 29 July 2017 12:23

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CD 1

- 1-Sunrise
- 2-Stars
- 3-A New Flame
- 4-Holding Back The Years
- 5-It's Only Love
- 6-The Right Thing
- 7-Your Mirror
- 8-For Your Babies
- 9-The Air That I Breathe
- 10-Night Nurse
- 11-Ain't That A Lot Of Love
- 12-Fake
- 13-Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye

CD 2

- 1-You've Got It
- 2-Say You Love Me
- 3-So Not Over You
- 4-Angel
- 5-Never Never Love
- 6-Home
- 7-You Make Me Feel Brand New
- 8-Something Got Me Started
- 9-Money's Too Tight To Mention
- 10-Fairground
- 11-If You Don't Know Me By Now
- 12-Go

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Simply Red's second major hits collection not only celebrates their illustrious 25-year career but also marks the end of it, thanks to Mick Hucknall's announcement that he will henceforth only be working under his own name. The much more comprehensive 25 features all but two of the tracks included on 1996's Greatest Hits, plus several tracks from the commercially inconsistent last decade. Of course, it's the late-'80s and early-'90s material that made Simply Red, essentially a solo vehicle for Hucknall, a household name. The likes of "A New Flame," "Holding Back the Years," and debut hit "Money's Too Tight (To Mention)" all showcase their signature blue-eyed soul sound, which has helped to sell over 50 million records worldwide. The funky piano-led "Something Got Me Started" and wistful dreamy title track justify Stars' multi-platinum success; their only number one single, "Fairground," is a mesmerizing fusion of tribal rhythms and ambient chillout pop; while "Angel," a collaboration with Fugees' Pras Michel, is a surprisingly passable attempt at hip-hop lite. And the likes of "If You Don't Know Me by Now" and "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" show that Hucknall is a master of interpreting classics to make them sound his own. But by the late '90s, their over-reliance on cover versions began to signal their decline. "The Air That I Breathe," "Night Nurse," and "Ain't That a Lot of Love," all pale imitations of the originals, explain the dwindling album sales and the Warner Records departure. However, 2003 comeback album Home, released via Hucknall's own label, was a welcome return to form as the Hall & Oates sampling "Sunrise," classy dance-pop of "Fake," and soulful rendition of "You Make Me Feel Brand New" became his best and most successful singles in almost a decade. The only new track featured here, a cover of "Go Now," is a disappointingly lazy final curtain to an eventful career. But overall, 25 is an accomplished collection of songs that cements Hucknall's reputation as one Britain's finest soul singers. ---Jon O'Brien, AllMusic Review

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