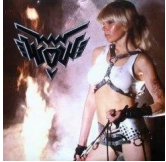


Wendy O. Williams - W.O.W. (1984)

Written by bluesever

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1. *I Love Sex (And Rock and Roll)* 2. *It's My Life* 3. *Priestess* 4. *Thief in the Night* 5. *Opus in Cm7* 6. *Ready to Rock* 7. *Bump 'N' Grind* 8. *Legends Never Die* 9. *Ain't None of Your Business* Bass Guitar – Reginald Van Helsing, Gene Simmons Drums – Eric Carr, T.C. Tolliver (1,5,7) Lead Guitar – Michael Ray (1, 3, 6, 8, 9) Lead Vocals – Wendy O. Williams Rhythm Guitar – Wes Beech Guitar - Micki Free, Ace Frehley, Paul Stanley Piano - Mitch Weissman

Wendy O. Williams wasted no time staking out a solo career following the Plasmatics' 1983 breakup. She found a patron in Kiss' tongue-wagging bassist Gene Simmons, who'd taken her old band on tour as a support act. The result led to Simmons' first production work outside of Kiss (while he credited his bass playing as Reginald Van Helsing, a pseudonym that didn't fool astute fans). Simmons felt that Williams could succeed on her own terms, with better material and production. Simmons was half-right: his impressive production work stacks saber-toothed guitars on lush keyboards without burying Williams' two-fisted attitude. A solid supporting cast of former Plasmatics guitarist Wes Beech and drummer T.C. Tolliver doesn't hurt. Neither do cameos by Kiss guitarists Paul Stanley, Ace Frehley, and late drummer Eric Carr. Simmons himself co-writes five tracks (which also carry the names of Plasmatics bassist Junior Romanelli and lead guitarist Richie Stotts, who aren't actually on the album). Williams sounds sturdy and self-assured on the raunchy romps of "I Love Sex (And Rock 'N' Roll)" and "Bump and Grind," although the standout track is the Simmons/Stanley anthem "It's My Life," a thumping pop-metal vow to "do what I like." Another highlight is the pop ballad "Legends Never Die," as close to a conventional vocal performance as Williams ever managed. (The main riff went unused on Kiss' own *Creatures in the Night* album [1982], until Simmons dusted it off for inclusion here.) In some ways, Williams' first solo venture amounts to a watered-down echo of the Plasmatics' own bid for mainstream success, *Coup d'Etat* (1982), minus the latter record's radical political bent. That's not surprising, with the ever-career-conscious Simmons manning the producer's chair. Despite his best efforts, however, Williams would stay a quintessential cult artist. While not a remarkable record, *WOW* offers a convincing enough glimpse of the stardom that should have been hers all along. --- Ralph Heibutzki, allmusic.com

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