

Grant Green - Green Is Beautiful (1970)

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1. *Ain't It Funky Now* (Brown) 9:58 2. *A Day in the Life* (Lennon/McCartney) 9:02 3. *The Windjammer* (Creque/Creque) 5:42 4. *I'll Never Fall In Love Again* (Bacharach/David) 6:46 5. *Dracula* (Creque/Creque) 6:05 Personnel: Blue Mitchell - trumpet Claude Barteaux - tenor sax Emmanuel Riggins - organ Neal Creque - organ* Grant Green - guitar Jimmy Lewis - bass (electro) Idris Muhammad - drums Candido Camero - conga Richie "Pablo" Landrum - bongo

The second album of Grant Green's thorough jazz-funk makeover, *Green Is Beautiful* finds the guitarist growing more comfortable with harder, funkier R&B than he seemed on the softer-hued *Carryin' On*. The switch from Fender Rhodes electric piano back to the more traditional Hammond organ certainly helps give the session a little extra grit, but it doesn't return Green to the land of soul-jazz by any means. *Green Is Beautiful* is still explicitly commercial and accessible to non-jazz audiences, and (purist objections notwithstanding) that's not necessarily a bad thing. Green's take on James Brown's "Ain't It Funky Now" is one of the funkier items in his rare-groove period; it may be chordally very simple, but the groove is tight and percolating, and Green, tenor saxophonist Claude Barteaux, and trumpeter Blue Mitchell all come up with hot, exciting solos. The album also benefits from Green's discovery of composer and occasional organist Earl Neal Creque, who contributes two bright, slinky, horn-driven originals: "The Windjammer," which became one of the signature tunes of Green's late period, and "Dracula." They help give the album a more original voice, and indicate that Green was actively making himself at home in his new musical environment, not just mixing dull originals with phoned-in covers of pop and R&B hits (as he and many other '70s Blue Note artists were accused of doing). Of course, there are still pop covers present -- the Beatles' "A Day in the Life" is a mellow, mid-tempo groove, and Bacharach's "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" doesn't stray far from the melody. Even if those aren't particularly distinctive, the remainder of *Green Is Beautiful* proves that Green's reinvention as a jazz-funk artist wasn't the misguided disaster it was initially made out to be. --- Steve Huey, Rovi

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