

"Songs In The Key Of Life" - Stevie Wonder (arr, hca, keyb, voc);
Minnie Riperton (voc); Ronnie Foster (org), Herbie Hancock (keyb);
Michael Sembello, Howard 'Buzz' Feiten (g); George Benson (g, voc);
Jim Horn (sax); George Bohannon (tb); Raymond Maldonado (tr,
perc); Raymond Lee Pounds (dr); a.o. Motown 13-340C2

Stevie Wonder: Songs In The Key Of Life

Format: 2 LPs / gatefold sleeve incl. booklet, 7" EP

Release date: 15.09.2008

To sing songs in the key of life, as the cover promises us, must be more of an exercise than a labour of love for a soul musician. But this album, which Stevie Wonder – just 26 years old – produced more or less on his own, turned out to be a raving success at the time. The collection of love songs, childhood recollections and ghetto scenes were considered to be the ultimate confirmation of his extraordinary talent according to People Magazine while Melody Maker considered the album to be the »most essential recording of the year«.

That this collection should be considered as a complete work of art is easy to understand when one has listened to it right through because it's not a collection of hits and 'best-ofs', and one has the opportunity to make one's own choice of top hits. Each number is a unique musical jewel: the one has an earthy basic sound, subtle percussion, a funky bass melody and a rocking Rhodes piano; another has cloudy a capella passages and makes use of electronics in a gentle, never diffuse sounding way. This results in a microcosm of black soul and feelings composed out of sounds, rhythms and lyrics which can hardly be surpassed as far as complexity is concerned. Now it becomes quite clear as to why Michael Jackson and co. borrowed an idea here or there from this work of wonder.

Recording: 1975/76 at Crystal Industries (Hollywood), Hit Factory (New York), Record Plant (Los Angeles); Record Plant (Sausalito, CA.) by John Fischbach and Gary Olazabal

Production: Stevie Wonder

