

ONYX 1: Right Now (Label: NL 2 Records)

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Onyx 1 originates from Oakland and began life as a Temptations-style group but soon graduated to funk. They recorded sporadically and a couple of years back one of their old funk cuts, 'Break It Loose,' was featured on a very well-received compilation. Encouraged by the good press, the group (Wendell and Aaron Bassegy and Malvin Scott) decided to reform but enlisted Detroit's Terence Forsyth as lead - and what a great choice. Forsyth possesses a silky smooth soul voice - a voice good enough to impress Richard Street who enlisted him into his touring incarnation of the Temptations... and I guess that the Tempts are the best comparison to draw. Onyx 1 has now ditched the funk and their aim is to make real grown-up soul music. Hear it to best effect on the ballad that is 'Mine All Mine' - sweet, yet with a real soul edge. It's so good in its original incarnation that the R&B-ish remix towards the end is redundant. Other goodies include the opener 'It's Time For Love', the melodic 'When You Weren't Looking', and the jazzy title cut which feature great piano from Jimmy Ali. All are gentle and mid-paced and should please sophisticated soul people and smooth jazz fans alike.

(BB) 4/5