

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Soul Togetherness 2007 (Label: Expansion)

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With hordes of soul devotees about to descend on Blackpool this coming weekend (9th and 10th of November) for the annual 'Togetherness' weekender, Expansion has released this tasty 15-track assemblage devoted to showcasing some of the tastiest Modern Soul morsels doing serious damage on the specialist dance floors and airwaves. The album kicks off with 'Don't Take It Too Hard,' a storming uptempo slice of retro-disco-soul from Finnish singer/songwriter, Tuomo. In fact, Tuomo, is one of several European artists featured on this superlative compilation - others include Wahoo from Germany (the hypnotic 'Don't Take It Personal'); Tassel & Naturel from France (the gorgeously mellow 'Let Love Shine'); Seven from Switzerland (his 'Brother & Sister' features vocalist, Tamar Davis); and Danish twosome, Cool Million, whose 'Naughty Girl' is fronted by singer, Lene Riebau. But the international connection doesn't end there, as the lovely Incognito-style 'Beauty-Flow' by Japanese act, Jazztronik illustrates. Of the Stateside tracks present here, gospel chanteuse, Darlene McCoy, impresses with the irresistible testifying groove of 'U-N-I-T-Y.' There's even more Holy Roller spirit in 'I Really Love You,' an aisle-stomping gospel number by Norman Hutchins but the track that really catches the ear is a brilliant brand new cut called 'Satisfied' (exclusive to this collection) by veteran vocalist, Alicia Myers. If that wasn't enough, there is a couple of tasty golden oldies in the shape of Rena Scott's 'We Can Make It Better' (an addictive slice of Mtume-Lucas helmed disco-soul in the vein of Phyllis Hyman's 'You Know How To Love Me' from 1979) and Billy Griffin's 'Romantic Number' from 1992. All in all, then, a terrific collection and one that offers a vivid snapshot of today's 'Togetherness' Modern Soul scene.

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