

## LUTHER VANDROSS: Love, Luther (Label: Sony BMG, Legacy)

Written by Bill Buckley

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The sad passing of Luther Vandross left a void in the soul world that will never be filled. Happily the great man left a magnificent musical legacy which will last forever and in the coming years, I'm sure, his albums will be re-issued and re-packaged alongside all kinds of compilations and collections. Its doubtful, though, if any future set will get anywhere near the majesty, thoroughness and poignancy of this new four CD, 56 track collection. Where 'Love, Luther' scores is in its sheer variety - juxtaposing, as it does, the familiar with the less so; then, to top it all, we're treated to five previously unreleased items. Let's deal with them first. Three come in a sequence of tracks that were recorded during rehearsals in Montserrat and include a wonderful new look at 'So Amazing' and brand new song, 'There's Only You'. The other two rarities are demos for 'Ready For Love' and 'If You Can't Dance'. Accompanied by a simple piano, both cuts portray the beauty of THAT voice which is strangely so familiar thanks to top tunes like 'Never Too Much', 'If Only For One Night', 'Shine' and 'Anyone Who Had A Heart'. Those and many more big ones are included but the set preserves its freshness with the inclusion of lovely album cuts like 'Don't Wanna Be A Fool' and 'I'd Rather'. There's also plenty of duets (check how the Sinatra collaboration really swings); live recordings (including a lovely Burt Bacharach tribute); and plenty from the early days - including tracks with Change, Greg Diamond and Charme. There's even a cut from the rare Cotillion 'Luther' album 'Its 'Funky Music' - slightly different to how I remember the original, but still superb. As a tribute to a singer who could make a Juicy Fruit ad sound soulful this collection is essential... and if you doubt my Juicy Fruit reference - well the chewing gum jingle is included too.

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