

## K JOHNSON: Anticipation (Label: tBMB Records)

Written by Bill Buckley

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K (Kareem) Johnson is the latest soul contender to emerge from Atlanta and his production people - the wonderfully named "the Big Monkey Boys" - have high hopes for him. However my initial response to the album was one of disappointment. The opener is a gratuitous heavy-breather while the second track is a pedestrian R&B thumper with a hint of gangsta rap. About to reach for eject, my attention was caught the complexities of track 3 - a layered ballad called 'Anticipation' over which Mr. Johnson's voice floated in a Maxwell-ish kind of way. The Maxwell connection was heightened by the double kick beat while the ballad, 'Rated R' had more of that 'Urban Hang Suite' about it. Indeed the use of a cut called 'Slowly' as a prelude and an outro jam called to mind the way Maxwell topped and tailed that magical debut set. Johnson's work though is nowhere near as totally satisfying as 'Urban Hang Suite' was. There's too many nondescript and formulaic cuts (like the bumpy 'IOT') to make it stand clear of the pack, though 'Oh Lady' might appeal to those who dig second division Prince, while the vocal take on 'Slowly' has a real, simple, old school soul charm.

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