

Ray Charles & Betty Carter - Just You, Just Me (1991)

Written by bluesever

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01.Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye [04:41] 02.You and I [03:29] 03.Intro: Goodbye/We'll Be Together Again [03:21] 04.People Will Say We're in Love [02:53] 05.Cocktails for Two [03:16] 06.Side by Side [02:23] 07.Baby, It's Cold Outside [04:12] 08.Together [01:36] 09.For All We Know [03:45] 10.Takes Two to Tango [03:24] 11.Alone Together [04:47] 12.Just You, Just Me [01:58] 13.But on the Other Hand Baby [03:15] 14.I Never See Maggie Alone [05:39] 15.I Like to Hear It Sometime [02:49]

Here are 15 classic performances from the collaborative years of Ray Charles and Betty Carter, surely something in terms of a Mt. Rushmore when it comes to significant vocal performances, and who needs two other singers to fill in the faces on the monument? The president of vocal music in many ways will always be Ray Charles. He has pulled off soul, rock & roll, rhythm & blues, jazz, country & western, and even makes "God Bless America" sound like a piece of music and not an excuse to kill someone. He has a way with orchestration that is miraculous; again, it comes back to the fact that so much of his material has to have a solid, rocking feel that keeps his rhythm sections sounding so individualistic. While Charles tended to have the likes of David "Fathead" Newman soloing in his bands, here was his chance to have an expressive voice to bounce off of that was more the level of a John Coltrane. Betty Carter is a master vocalist whose every enunciation has that special presence and cosmic effect of the very first rank of jazz horn soloists; in fact, can they top her? Her entrance on "People Will Say We're in Love" is split-second swing timing, the kind of thing that would make a metronome scratch its head, if it had one. Its combination with Charles' charm and warm, romantic soul is just perfect. The listener will surely appreciate Carter's need to go on her own as artistically justifiable and probably emotionally necessary with or without the legendary Charles' temper, preserved on one bootleg recording as he has a drunken guitarist thrown off-stage for flubbing a note. Yet at the same time the universe of Ray Charles offers lots of benefits that she never quite had in her solo career. One is these types of brilliant orchestrations, although there is certainly no problem with hearing her typical context of a jazz piano trio, and she did do some large-group tracks on her own. She never recorded anything with the pop music flair of Charles, though; they don't call him "the genius" just because he can get to the piano bench without stumbling. Another benefit is Carter performing at slow tempos, since on her own her tendency

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is more along the lines of breaking the sound barrier. The opening "Everytime We Say Goodbye" is a slow tempo divided in half again; one can imagine an inept bass player getting through the entire thing before realizing he is playing too fast. "Baby, It's Cold Outside" is an obvious highlight, but others are "Takes Two to Tango" and the touching "I Like to Hear It Sometime." --- Eugene Chadbourne, Rovi

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