Boyz II Men – Motown: A Journey Through Hitsville USA (2007)

01. Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)
02. It's Same Old Song/Reach Out I'll Be There
03. Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)
04. Tracks Of My Tears
05. Money (That's What I Want)
06. Easy
07. I Was Made To Love Her
08. All This Love
09. Ribbon In The Sky (A Cappella)
10. Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing
(Feat. Patti LaBelle)
11. There'll Never Be
12. Got To Be There
13. War
14. End Of The Road (Feat. Brian McKnight)

Three years after the all-covers Throwback -- a release that included some pleasantly surprising choices for new looks, like One Way's "Cutie Pie" and Bobby Caldwell's "What You Won't Do for Love" -- Boyz II Men reappear with yet another covers affair. As indicated by the title, the trio changes its focus to Motown for a set that ranges thematically and chronologically from the Temptations' "Just My Imagination" to Marvin Gaye's "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" to the Commodores' "Easy" -- and, as something of a sly acknowledgment that they were once on Motown themselves, they close out the set with an a cappella version of "End of the Road" (featuring Brian McKnight). Their backing is mostly all-star caliber, including the Dap-Kings Horns, drummer Vinnie Colaiuta, percussionist Luis Conte, and string arranger Larry Gold. The material tends to work best when they sound relatively relaxed, as opposed to when it is obvious that they are trying very hard to honor the originals while being over-demonstrative with their obviously gifted voices. It's not that the disc won't please fans, because it likely will, despite

Boyz II Men's continued shortage of new songs; but it's nearly impossible at this point to add anything to the likes of "It's the Same Old Song," "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing," or "Money (That's What I Want)" -- no matter how well they are handled. ---Andy Kellman, Rovi

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