

Aretha Franklin – Runnin' Out Of Fools (1964)

Written by bluelover

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A1 Mockingbird A2 How Glad I Am A3 Walk On By A4 Every Little Bit Hurts A5 The Shoop Shoop Song A6 You'll Lose A Good Thing B1 I Can't Wait Until I See My Baby's Face B2 It's Just A Matter Of Time B3 Runnin' Out Of Fools B4 My Guy B5 Two Sides Of Love B6 One Room Paradise Aretha Franklin - Piano, Primary Artist, Vocals

Aretha Franklin was 22 and already a proven hit maker by 1964. But it was still a few years before “Respect” and “Think” would position her as the Queen of Soul, and she was unafraid to explore jazzier and bluesier territory. That year, she put out two records: Unforgettable, A Tribute to Dinah Washington and Runnin’ Out of Fools, the latter of which contained covers of “My Guy” and “Walk on By.” The former didn’t rank on any sales charts, but the latter made it to Number 84 on the Billboard chart and Number Nine on the publication’s nascent R&B chart.

It was also around this time that the earliest known footage of Franklin performing live that’s currently available online was captured. She sang the jazzy “Runnin’ Out of Fools” on one show (it’s not clear what program it was) and gave the song a show-stopping performance as she looked right into the camera and navigated the dramatically tune’s peaks and valleys with all the aplomb that would define her later career. The song, which was the only single from the album, was a moderate hit at the time, making it to Number 57 on the pop chart and Number 30 on the R&B chart.

That same year, on what looks like the same show, she sang “Tiny Sparrow,” an even jazzier song that’s also known as “Come All You Fair and Tender Ladies.” It’s a slower song that allowed Franklin to stretch her voice out and pour all of her emotion into its lyrics. It’s a moving performance with an special quality that bests the version she’d recorded the year before.

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And while supporting Unforgettable, she positioned herself for nationwide attention by appearing on The Steve Allen Show. In a clip, the host introduces her as a fresh talent, as he dabs soap off his face from a sketch before. As he gingerly shows the album cover to the camera, he calls her “one of the most exciting young singers in the business today.” Then the broadcast cuts to her singing a particularly swinging “*Lover, Come Back to Me*” (which curiously was not on the Unforgettable LP). The compilation of clips here also features a performance of her singing and playing piano on her 1961 single “*Rock-a-Bye Your Baby With a Dixie Melody*,” which finds her singing high and loud as she would later in her career. It also includes about 20 more minutes’ worth of captivating performances of her singing bluesy soul songs at a time when she was still defining who she was. It’s as though Franklin came into the world of music fully formed. ---rollingstone.com

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