## Peter, Paul & Mary - The Collection:  Their Greatest Hits & Finest Performances (2011)

CD1 - The Best Known and Loved *01 If I Had A Hammer  02 Lemon Tree  03 Cruel War  04 Don't Think Twice It's Alright  05 Puff(The Magic Dragon)  06 500 Miles  07 Early Mornin' Rain  07 Stewball  08 When The Ship Comes In* play *09 Blowin' In The Wind  10 Leaving On A Jet Plane  11 I Dig Rock And Roll Music  12 For Lovin' Me  13 Settle Down  14 Too Much Of Nothing  15 Where Have All The Flowers Gone?  16 Tell It On The Mountain  17 Day Is Done*

CD2 - Performers' Choice

*01 This Land Is Your Land  02 This Train*

play

*03 Gone The Rainbow  04 Freight Train  05 Greenland Whale Fisheries  06 There Is A Ship  07 Kisses Sweeter Than Wine  08 The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face  09 Mockingbird  10 Three Ravens  11 Ballad Of Spring Hill  12 75 Septembers  13 The Great Mandella  14 The House Song  15 Home On The Range  16 Don't Ever Take Away My Freedom  17 There But For Fortune  18 It Ain't Me Babe  19 The Times They Are A Changin*

It may seem amazing that Peter, Paul and Mary did not release a multi-disc retrospective until 1998, partly because they have retained a measure of control over their catalog. This four-CD/cassette retrospective is available only through the Reader's Digest Music mail-order division. Produced by Peter Yarrow, it conforms to Reader's Digest's Greatest Hits & Finest Performances format: the first disc contains the hit singles, followed by several thematic groupings of material. Disc One, "Best-Known, Best Loved," presents among its 18 selections 16 of the 20 PP&M songs that reached the pop singles charts -- 15 in their original hit recordings. Disc Two, subtitled "Performers' Choice, Album Favorites," selects from across the group's catalog, including many folk standards. Disc Three is divided into "For Kids, For Fun," drawing heavily from the two Peter, Paul and Mommy albums, and "Songs of Spirit," which contains religious and otherwise thoughtful material. And the entire fourth disc is given over to the group's solo efforts, most dating from their years apart in the 1970s. There are some missing songs a fan might have liked to see here, but with 70 tracks, a large part of the group's repertoire is included, including three-quarters of the Peter, Paul and Mary album. Since PP&M

were more devoted to individual songs than albums, changed their style relatively little over the years, and were remarkably consistent, their work is not harmed by being resequenced in this manner. One could think of better groupings of material -- traditional folk songs, political material, group originals -- but PP&M always specialized in mixing things up, so maybe this is as good as anything. A more serious criticism is the lack of any real rarities beyond a few out-of-print tracks -- no one-off singles like the campaign songs for Eugene McCarthy -- so fans who have the albums on CD don't have much incentive to invest in the fairly hefty price tag. The booklet contains a brief biography, but is mostly given over to the group members' comments on the selections; annotations are not included. A box set of Peter, Paul and Mary's work was long overdue. Now that it's available, at least by mail order, maybe the group and Warner Bros. can think about a retail version that would repair some of these shortcomings. ---William Ruhlmann, AllMusic Review

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