

The Marvelettes - Please Mr. Postman (1961)

Written by bluelover

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01. "Angel" (Sonny Sanders, Robert Bateman) 02. "I Want a Guy" (Brian Holland, Freddie Gorman, Berry Gordy) 03. "Please Mr. Postman" (Georgia Dobbins, William Garrett, Freddie Gorman, Brian Holland, Robert Bateman) 04. "So Long Baby" (Robert Bateman) 05. "I Know How It Feels" (Janie Bradford, Robert Bateman, Richard Wylie) 06. "Way Over There" (Berry Gordy, William Robinson) 07. "Happy Days" (Berry Gordy) 08. "You Don't Want Me No More" (Berry Gordy) 09. "All The Love I Got" (Berry Gordy, Janie Bradford) 10. "Whisper" (Berry Gordy, Marv Johnson) 11. "Oh I Apologize" (Berry Gordy, William Robinson) Gladys Horton - Lead and background vocals Wanda Young - Lead and background vocals Georgeanna Tillman - Background vocals Katherine Anderson - Background vocals Wyanetta "Juanita" Cowart - Background vocals Raynoma Liles Gordy - Musitron and Ondoline The Funk Brothers - Other instrumentation

Clearly the focus of Please Mr. Postman (1961) -- the Marvelettes' debut long-player -- is the title track. However, fans of the early Motown sound will be interested not only in the vocalists' soulful and swinging leads, but contributions from burgeoning songwriters Berry Gordy, William "Smokey" Robinson, and Brian Holland as well. Although the Marvelettes personnel changed several times during their early-'60s prime, the lineup featured here includes co-leads Gladys Horton (vocals) and Wanda Young (vocals), along with Georgeanna Tillman (vocals), Katherine Anderson (vocals), and Juanita Cowart (vocals). By the time this album became available in late 1961, three months had passed since "Please Mr. Postman" concluded its seven-week run atop the R&B singles chart. In the interim, the record label mined the ladies' talent for a suitable follow-up. The closest to hail from the bunch would be the midtempo Wall of Sound-alike "I Want a Guy" which was relegated to the B-side of their next single, "Twistin' Postman." That certainly isn't to intimate the remainder of the effort is subpar, but rather that lightning had yet to strike twice as Motown was continually refining the label's sound. The uptempo "Angel" is clearly rooted in then-recent R&B styles with more than a passing resemblance to another successful all-girl group. Specifically, the Chantels' and their Top 20 crossover ballad "Maybe." To much the same end is the languid and bluesy doo wop-influenced "So Long Baby," as well as the ballads "Whisper" and "Oh I Apologize." The melodic "I Know How It Feels" joins Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy's danceable "Way Over There" and the slightly Latin-tinged rave-up

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"You Don't Want Me No More." Although Please Mr. Postman has been difficult to locate on compact disc, it is among the contents of Forever: The Complete Motown Albums, Vol. 1 (2009) box set from the Hip-O Select online audio boutique. --- Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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