Cliff Richard – I’m Nearly Famous (1976/2001)



1 I Can't Ask For Anymore Than You 2 It's No Use Pretending 3 I'm Nearly Famous 4 Lovers 5 Junior Cowboy 6 Miss You Nights 7 I Wish You'd Change Your Mind 8 Devil Woman 9 Such Is The Mystery 10 You've Got To Give Me All Your Lovin' 11 If You Walked Away 12 Alright, It's Alright 13 Love Enough (Bonus Track) 14 Love On (Shine On) (Bonus Track) 15 Honky Tonk Angel (Bonus Track) 16 Wouldn't You Know It (Bonus Track) 17 It's Only Me You've Left Behind (Bonus Track) 18 You're The One (Bonus Track)

TI'm Nearly Famous is the album which marked Cliff Richard's return from the commercial and, in many ways, creative void which had consumed him since the end of the 1960s. Recorded with former Shadow Brian Bennett in the production chair and boasting the most consistently excellent clutch of songs and performances Richard had mustered in over a decade, the album was previewed by the lovely "Miss You Night," opened with the neo-disco "I Can't Ask for Anything More," and peaked with "Devil Woman," a rocker which became his first ever U.S. Top Ten hit. But they were simply the best-known standouts. "It's No Use Pretending" was an anthemic ballad with more than a hint of Elton John around its execution -- quite coincidentally, it was John's Rocket label which oversaw the album's American release. From the same writing team of Michael Allison and Peter Sill, the riff sodden rocking title track, too, has ghosts of John around it -- think "Crocodile Rock" meets "Bennie & the Jets." The tide flows both ways, however. Of course the two artists sound alike, but there was a time, when John was first breaking through, when a lot of people thought he sounded like Richard. Chicken? Meet the egg. There are a couple of less than stellar moments -- "Lovers" is basic big ballad by numbers, "Junior Cowboy" is the kind of ersatz country rocker which Richard had done much better in the past. What's important, however, is that once these would have been the highlights of a new Richard album; either that, or indistinguishable from all the other ballads and country rockers on board. This time around, they were simply a lull before the next masterpiece rolled out. I'm Nearly Famous rates, alongside David Cassidy's The Higher They Climb, among the most surprising albums of the mid-1970s, a record which was made in the face of both critical hostility and public indifference, yet managed to completely redefine its creator in the eyes of both. Cassidy, of course, never followed up his renaissance. Richard, on the other hand, hasn't

looked back since. ---Dave Thompson, AllMusic Review

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