

Power: The Al Green Collection 1985-1990

(CD Booklet)

It seems apparent that legendary, soul singer Al Green has had an endless career that only gets better with time. Spanning almost five decades, this singer/songwriter has stood strong in the face of adversity and hit some of his highest heights-all while embracing his love of God and his music.

It began in the '50s at the age of nine, when Al and his brothers formed a gospel quartet, The Green Brothers. This Arkansas native didn't find music...music found him. And the group enjoyed local success touring the gospel circuit until the family uprooted to Grand Rapids, Michigan. Life changed for Al as he adjusted to new surroundings, a freer environment and new temptations. Being a part of the more liberal north, this future superstar was introduced to music that was more worldly, and he liked it. One day his father caught him listening to Jackie Wilson, and forced him to leave the quartet. That was a deep blow for Green, whose musical world simply shattered. But that didn't stop him from moving closer to his dreams. It was at the age of 16 when he and a few high school friends formed an R&B/pop group called Al Green and the Creations. Life was looking up for the group, when two of the members, Palmer James and Curtis Rogers, started the record label, Hot Line Music Journal. It was then that the group changed their name to Al Green and the Soul Mates, and they charted their only hit "Back Up Train" in 1967, which topped the national R&B charts at #5. Then, ironically, the group disbanded.

Just before moving into the '70s, Green met bandleader and producer Willie Mitchell, who was also Vice President of Hi Records. Mitchell was immediately drawn to the unique song stylings of Al Green, and signed him to the label. This proved not only to be a step in the right direction for the R&B singer, but would also set the stage for a very successful decade that would put this young hopeful on the map. His first solo album, *Green Is Blues*, had a marginal debut. But the project was more instrumental in solidifying a concrete working relationship between Green and Mitchell. Then came his second album, and a string of hits that included "You Say It," "Right Now, Right Now," a cover of the Temptations' popular hit "I Can't Get Next You" and his first gold single that he wrote "Tired Of Being Alone." But the hits didn't stop there. For the next three years, Al Green enjoyed the success of many gold singles that he wrote, along with those of his writing team of Mitchell and Al Jackson. It was the number one pop and R&B hit "Let's Stay Together" that took him to the top of the charts. Other hits included "Look What You Done For Me," "I'm Still In Love With You," "You Ought To Be With Me," "Here I Am (Come And Take Me)" and "L-O-V-E (Love)." His Memphis-soul sound was the music that America had been longing for.

As the decade approached its mid-point, Green encountered a life-changing experience. A former New Jersey girlfriend, Mary Woodson, threw boiling grits on him while he was bathing in his Memphis home. Then, she killed herself with his gun. The singer was left

hospitalized with second-degree burns to his back, arm and stomach. It was during that period that the R&B singer/songwriter saw the light and was moved to join the ministry.

Green's transition was smooth and things naturally fell into place. He became an ordained pastor and purchased a building in Memphis that became the Full Gospel Tabernacle. It was during that time when he rediscovered himself and cultivated a loving relationship with God, while pondering what would happen to his gift of music.

He decided he would not give up all that he had earned, even if it was in the secular field, and found his way to happiness both at the pulpit and on concert stages. He still was popular with R&B listeners and pop fans due to his early hits, so people all over the world waited patiently for the next string of Al Green hits.

At that time, his songs sporadically were showing up on both the R&B and pop charts, but his once popular music career seemed to be at a stand still. Green decided to take a more aggressive approach to things by building a music studio in 1977 and producing his own records. He never moved from the Memphis-soul sound that led him to fame, though he now looked to take his career to newer heights. But during a concert in Cincinnati, Ohio, Green fell off the stage and escaped with only minor injuries. That was yet another episode in the life of this musical wonder, that guided him back to the church. For a period of time, he toured the country but only in religious settings. He sang and preached and strengthened his ministry.

Then came the energetic '80s! Green was still heavily into the word, and his career was once again moving forward. He switched to the gospel label, Myrrh, and discovered a new joy in singing gospel music. He found a way to blend the Memphis-soul sound with the good news that yielded a flavor that congregations around the world were shouting about. And his records were hits! Not only did the gospel community welcome Reverend Green with open arms, but he also was sharing his ministry on stage. In 1982, he did a short run in the popular Broadway stage play, *Your Arms Too Short To Box With God*, co-starring with Patti LaBelle. This was Vinette Carroll's hit gospel musical and Green was excited about sharing his ministry in this arena.

But still, he did not want to abandon all of the work from his R&B/pop era. After all, Green's music spoke of love—one of the most powerful gifts that God has given. So he embarked upon the next phase of his career that would include music that was a more uplifting version of his R&B style...music on more of an inspirational level.

It now was the mid-'80s, and Green's career experienced resurgence as he moved to powerhouse recording label A&M, and the spark in his music appeared to be restored. His first release, *He Is The Light*, was an early gospel project that re-established him. And it did well, yielding favorites like "Going Away," "True Love," "I Feel Like Going On," "Power," "Building Up" and his popular hit, "You Brought The Sunshine." His music made a strong statement that boasted of his belief in God while maintaining his love of music. And all of his light showed. Green knew that his spiritual path truly was being directed by God, because everything was falling into place for him. And now,

gospel music was about to experience its second wind which would help take Green's music ministry to a whole new level.

In the mid-to-late '80s, PTL and televangelists were popular across the country. The world of gospel music was on fire for groups like the Winans and the Clark Sisters, and flirting with the idea of getting crossover airplay. Disc jockeys and music directors from New York to Los Angeles were now open to the notion of including uplifting songs in their regular rotations.

In '87, Green's follow-up album, *Soul Survivor* dropped and nobody could predict what was to happen next. The single "Everything's Gonna Be Alright" became a big hit on the gospel charts, as well as a top 25 hit on the R&B charts. The song was an anthem for anyone and everyone who was experiencing troubled times and wanted their day to get a little better. The young and old alike could relate to the hope of life being alright, and they flocked to record stores and jammed radio request lines to hear the popular hit. Other favorites from the project included "You Know And I Know," "So Real To Me," the title track, plus his inspirational cover of the pop/rock classic "You've Got A Friend," and a cover of "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." This was a top seller for A&M and a wonderful boost of faith for Green. He once again could see the purpose of his music touching people's lives.

But the music didn't stop at only recordings, radio stations and stages around the world. Green's musical works would now leap into the film industry as well. In '88, he sang the duet "Put A Little Love In Your Heart" with pop star Annie Lennox of Eurythmics' fame. The song, from the movie soundtrack *Scrooged*, was a popular hit and it displayed yet another aspect of his musical versatility while showcasing his crossover appeal. Speaking of crossing over, Green was flattered when the pop group Talking Heads covered his original "Take Me To The River." It was one of the group's biggest hits.

In '89, Green enjoyed another popular project on A&M-I Get Joy. Continuing with his inner theme of love and being a servant for God, fans once again were touched with more inspiring songs that captured their hearts and moved their souls. It was singles like "Mighty Clouds Of Joy," "As Long As We're Together"-his first Top 20 R&B single in over 10 years (recorded with vocalist Al B. Sure), "Tryin' To Do The Best I Can" and the title song that remind us that love is the greatest gift that we all have the ability to share...in our daily walk of life and even through our talents.

It was a new day in the '90s as Green glided into a more confident music career as he continued to crank out new projects. With gospel music now in full swing, thanks to the efforts of artists like BeBe & Cece Winans, Commissioned and Kurt Carr & The Kurt Carr Singers, a more contemporary style of gospel was now becoming widely accepted. In '92, Green released the inspirational favorite "Love Is Reality." The CD did pretty well, and he followed it up with his '93 hit "Gospel Soul."

In '95, *Your Heart's In Good Hands* marked the release of Green's full return to R&B music on the BMG Label. And in that same year, he received one of music's biggest

honors-he was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame. In the year 2000, he released his popular Greatest Gospel Hits collection. And yes, the soul legend even co-wrote his biography with David Seay, Take Me To The River. He also kept busy with a recurring role on the Fox Television series Ally McBeal.

In his over 40-year career, Al Green has earned 9 Grammy(r) Awards with music we call soul, and music that is for the soul. He has found a way to mix the sacred and the secular, like that of his musical mentor, Sam Cooke-and he's made it work. Green is a musical genius who has withstood the test of time.

And if you're wondering what it is about the music of Al Green that encourages us to sing a little more, smile a little more and love a little more-simply hum one of his timeless tunes and you'll have the answer.

Licia L. Shearer
July 2001

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(CD Booklet)

- 1) Put A Little Love In Your Heart - duet with Annie Lennox
(Jackie De Shannon - Randy Myers - Jimmy Holiday)
Pop #9 / chart debut: 11-5-88
Produced by David A. Stewart
Annie Lennox appears courtesy of RCA Records, A Bertelsmann Music Group Company
from the A&M soundtrack Scrooged - 1988
- 2) Going Away
(Al Green)
Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985
- 3) True Love
(Al Green - Willie Mitchell)
Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985
- 4) I Feel Like Going On - same
(Al Green)
Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985
- 5) You Brought The Sunshine
(Elbernita Clark)

Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985

6) Power
(Al Green - Willie Mitchell)
Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985

7) Building Up
(Al Green)
Produced by Willie Mitchell
from the A&M album He Is The Light - 1985

8) Everything's Gonna Be Alright
(Eban Kelly - Jimi Randolph)
R&B 22 / chart debut: 3-28-87
Produced by Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

9) You Know And I Know
(Al Green - Paul Zaleski)
Produced by Paul Zaleski & Errol Thomas
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

10) You've Got A Friend
(Carole King)
Produced by Deborah McDuffie
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

11) He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother
(Bob Russell - Bobby Scott)
Produced by Paul Zaleski & Errol Thomas
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

12) Soul Survivor
(Eban Kelly - Jimi Randolph)
Produced by Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

13) You're Everything To Me
(Al Green - Denise Flippen)
Produced by Al Green, Paul Zeleski, Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album I Get Joy - 1989

14) Mighty Clouds Of Joy
(R. Nix - B. Buie)

Produced by Al Green, Paul Zeleski, Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album I Get Joy - 1989

15) As Long As We're Together
(Al Green)

R&B #15 / chart debut: 6-3-89

Produced by Al Green, Paul Zeleski, Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album I Get Joy - 1989

16) Tryin' To Do The Best I Can
(Al Green)

Produced by Al Green, Paul Zeleski, Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album I Get Joy - 1989

17) I Get Joy
(Al Green - Denise Flippen)

Produced by Al Green, Paul Zeleski, Eban Kelly & Jimi Randolph
from the A&M album I Get Joy - 1989

18) So Real To Me
(Al Green)

Produced by Paul Zaleski & Errol Thomas
from the A&M album Soul Survivor - 1987

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Also Available by Al Green:

Soul Survivor (750 215 150-4)

Your Heart's In Good Hands (MCAD-11350)

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(CD Label)

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(CD Spine)

A&M logo Power: The Al Green Collection 1985-1990 069 493 122-2

(CD Inlay)

- 1) Put A Little Love In Your Heart - duet with Annie Lennox 3:48
- 2) Going Away 3:34
- 3) True Love 4:27
- 4) I Feel Like Going On 3:09
- 5) You Brought The Sunshine 5:05
- 6) Power 5:18
- 7) Building Up 3:07
- 8) Everything's Gonna Be Alright 4:21
- 9) You Know And I Know 3:58
- 10) You've Got A Friend 5:35
- 11) He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother 4:00
- 12) Soul Survivor 4:40
- 13) You're Everything To Me 4:16
- 14) Mighty Clouds Of Joy 4:15
- 15) As Long As We're Together 3:48
- 16) Tryin' To Do The Best I Can 3:01
- 17) I Get Joy 3:52
- 18) So Real To Me :50

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18 Inspirational Al Green Recordings Including "Everything's Gonna Be Alright,"
"As Long As We're Together" plus his duet with Annie Lennox
"Put A Little Love In Your Heart"

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