

JOE JACKSON'S
"BODY AND SOUL":
INTELLIGENT
ROMANTIC BALLADS
THAT LEGITIMIZE
NAKED EMOTION



ANYONE without the kind of "New Music" credentials Joe Jackson has would be hooted off to Las Vegas—or, worse, the Grammys—for making music as unapologetically romantic as that on his new "Body and Soul" album. But Jackson's honesty and intelligence let him get away with it.

Apart from legitimizing naked emotion, Joe Jackson has done another wonderful thing with "Body and Soul"—revived the lost art of liner notes. The ones here were written by the album's producer, David Kershenbaum, and they are informative and insightful in the tradition of Leonard Feather, Nat Hentoff, and Ralph Gleason. In fact, the entire package—patterned exactly after a Sonny Rollins series on Blue Note records, right down to the duotone cover, liner typography, and thicker-than-average disc in-

Joe Jackson: affecting vocals, flickering piano chords, honest lyrics

side—has the look and feel of Fifties jazz. But, except for the larger ensemble used here, which includes muted trumpet and flugelhorn, saxophone, flute, and jazz guitar, the music itself retains the Latin/light-jazz flavor of Jackson's "Night and Day" and "Mike's Murder," with an emphasis on ballads and slow-to-moderate dance tempos.

This is not to suggest that Joe Jackson hasn't progressed with this album: he has. Lyrically, he's less cleverly circumspect about the emotional content. It's right out in the open this time. And "Body and Soul" can claim three of the best things he's ever done—*The Verdict*, *Loisaida*, and *Heart of Ice*. *The Verdict* is a song of powerful contrasts—majestic drum and brass

fanfares alternate with the hushed tone of Jackson's piano accompaniment and fragile vocal, all the more affecting because it scrapes against the very top of his range. *Loisaida* and *Heart of Ice* are, interestingly, instrumentals. The former is a mournful theme for sax and trumpet, which plumb the deepest lamp-lit sorrows while Jackson's piano chords flicker above like a starry night. *Heart of Ice* starts with just a steady rhythm in the high-hat, then adds trumpet and flute, bass, tenor and alto sax, piano, synthesizer and guitar—each combination restating, amplifying, and embellishing the song's luminous theme. It's capped with a chorus—sung by Jackson,

Elaine Caswell, and Ellen Foley—that's so jubilant it's impossible not to feel better after hearing it.

While Jackson's muse isn't always that sharp—*Go for It* is a good idea awkwardly executed—"Body and Soul" has so much heart you hardly notice. It's the kind of album that can carry emotions and attach itself to a time, a place, or a feeling like a favorite hat—or an old Sonny Rollins ballad.

Mark Peel

JOE JACKSON: *Body and Soul*. Joe Jackson (vocals, piano, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *The Verdict*; *Cha Cha Loco*; *Not Here*; *Not Now*; *You Can't Get What You Want (Till You Know What You Want)*; *Go for It*; *Loisaida*; *Happy Ending*; *Be My Number Two*; *Heart of Ice*. A&M SP 5000 \$8.98, © CS 5000 \$8.98; © CD 5000, no list price.