

entertainment

Stevie's creativity continues

by Winfred Cross
Staff Writer

Stevie Wonder's creativity never ceases to amaze me. When asked to write a song for Dionne Warwick to sing in "The Woman In Red," he responded by writing seven in about two weeks, most of which he decided to perform himself. What Wonder did in two weeks puts what others have taken months to do to shame. "The Woman In Red" is the best soundtrack album I've heard in years.

Each song is a joy to listen to. The album's lead song, the title, is a spritely R&B number which not only shows Wonder's amazing insight, but also his sense of humor. *Am I seeing what I think I see/Or are my eyes playing tricks on me.../Earth Venus in broad daylight/Goddess of love*

standing in my sight.

The album's second song, "It's You," is a duet with Warwick. The two create a perfect vocal marriage. Wonder achieves what Luther Vandross only attempted for Warwick; he not only compliments her voice but he also gives her something good to sing.

"It's More Than You," is an okay instrumental. It is the only song that Wonder did not write.

"I Just Called To Say I Love You," the album's first number 1 single, is a cute but very simple pop song. At first I thought it was too simple to be a Wonder composition. But when I found out about the movie scene for the song, I understood why. The guy Wonder sings about feels so guilty about cheating on his wife, he calls her and thinks up every lie he



can to explain why he called.

The second side is by far the album's better. It opens with "Love Light In Flight," a fluid mix of pop and black dance music. For this one, Wonder pushes his voice to the limit, soaring skyward over the lilting synthesizer riffs.

And the album just gets better and better. "Moments Aren't Moments," a solo by Warwick, is one of the loveliest songs Wonder has ever written. Warwick's deep, rich voice does it supreme justice. "Weakness," another duet, has a strangely phrased chorus that lingers with you all day: *Everyone has got a certain weakness in life/Your love*

just happens to be mine.

"Don't Drive Drunk," the album's last song, is the closest Wonder comes to doing a social protest song. Actually, it's more of a public service song. I wouldn't be surprised if Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) adopted it as their theme song.

As good as this album is, the best thing about it is that it is not the album Wonder has been working on for the past two years. What that may mean is there will be two Stevie Wonder albums out in less than a year.

Have I died and gone to Wonderland?

Mills burns with energy

by Winfred Cross
Staff Writer

Stephanie Mills voice is like E.F. Hutton; when she sings, everyone listens. Since she reached stardom in the critically acclaimed Broadway musical "The Wiz," Mills has gone on to have a very successful recording career. Her explosive soprano has made her one of the best female recording artists in the music industry.

There have been a few dull moments in her sparkling career, however. After having success with producers James Mtume (now of "Juicy Fruit" fame) and Reggie Lucas (now producing the dreaded Madon-

na) she went for a more glamorous image and started producing herself. The results were "Tantalizingly Hot," a lackluster album that was neither tantalizing, nor hot.

Last year Mills got back to basics with "Merciless," an album filled with the fiery vocal performances that made her famous. With "I've Got The Cure" Mills turns up the heat a couple of notches and continues to sizzle.

The album opens with "The Medicine Song" a wide open funk number that burns with energy. The lyrics are a bit silly but Mills gives them such a murderous workout that it doesn't matter. The song and her performance typify the very aggressive mood of the album. On

songs like "Edge of the Razor," "In My Life," and "You Just Might Need A Friend," Mills is digging way down in her huge reservoir of vocal power and delivering some thundering notes. On "Outrageous," Mills ends the song sounding like a gospel singer with a chip on her shoulder.

No Mills album would be complete without a ballad. Thankfully, she includes two on the album. "Give It Half A Chance," one of Kenny Loggins's best compositions, is, simply put, beautiful. Mills caresses each word ever so softly, exploding at a moments notice for dramatic impact.

But album's showstopper is "Everlasting Love," a vintage Mills love song that showcases her incredi-

ble dynamic range. As an added sweetener, The Weather Girls are featured as background singers on the song. This song not only proves Mills' prowess as a singer but it also proves that The Weather Girls should stop singing novelty songs and just sing.

Much credit must be given to the album's co-producers-George Duke and David "Hawk" Wolinsky (former keyboard player for Rufus). They stay out of Mills' way and let her sing. The digital recording process that was used picks out every nuance of her expressive voice.

This is a first rate effort.

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