

# Berry Gordy's "Dragon": Really A Turkey

by Winfred Cross  
Staff Writer

There are at least half a dozen or so current movies that feature soundtrack albums by various artists, a form made popular and profitable by the movie "Flashdance". However, very few of these soundtracks, including "Flashdance", have been very good.

Such is the case for "Berry Gordy's The Last Dragon". There are plenty of heavy weights here Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, the Temptations - but none of these artists deliver anything that's worthy of their talents. The music is basically slick, forgettable fluff, ranging from pop to lightweight R&B.

There are a couple of things that are passable. "Inside You," which features veteran songwriter Willie Hutch with the Temptations, is a decent R&B song that uses the immense talents of the Tempts very sparingly. "Star," done by a new Motown girl-group named Alfie, features some gutsy lead vocals with background reminiscent of the Emotions. Rockwell's "Peeping Tom" has an ok dance beat but the kid should stick to his camp rap songs; he can't sing. I'm not particularly crazy about Debarge's voice either, but I must admit "Rhythm of the Night" is the best thing offered here. It is a highly dancable, summertime song that will probably yield the biggest hit from this package.

But there is a great deal here that just fails miserably. The title song, sung by Dwight David, is not much of a song; it's more like an exercise in special effects. Vanity's "7th Heaven" is just to camp for words. Charlene's attempt to do rock & roll, "Fire", just plain embarrassing. The movie's love theme "First Time On A Ferris Wheel," a duet by Smokey Robinson and Syreeta, is a maudlin lemon. The two sound ok together but the song is just too melodramatic for my tastes.

The biggest disappointment on this album is Stevie Wonder's "Upset Stomach", after doing a wonderful soundtrack for the "Woman In Red", Wonder offers his weakest song to date for this album. (Maybe he's saving the real stuff for "Square In Circle," his soon to be released next album).

Needless to say, the album also lacks cohesiveness. Like all albums in this genre, none of these songs hang together very well. Any of the artists on this album could have done all of the material, especially since none of it is very demanding.



Soundtracks usually don't offer enough information about a film to decide whether to see it or not. I hope this album is not an indication of the quality of the film. If it is, Berry Gordy's "Dragon" is a turkey.

# Simply Vandross: Simply Fantastic!

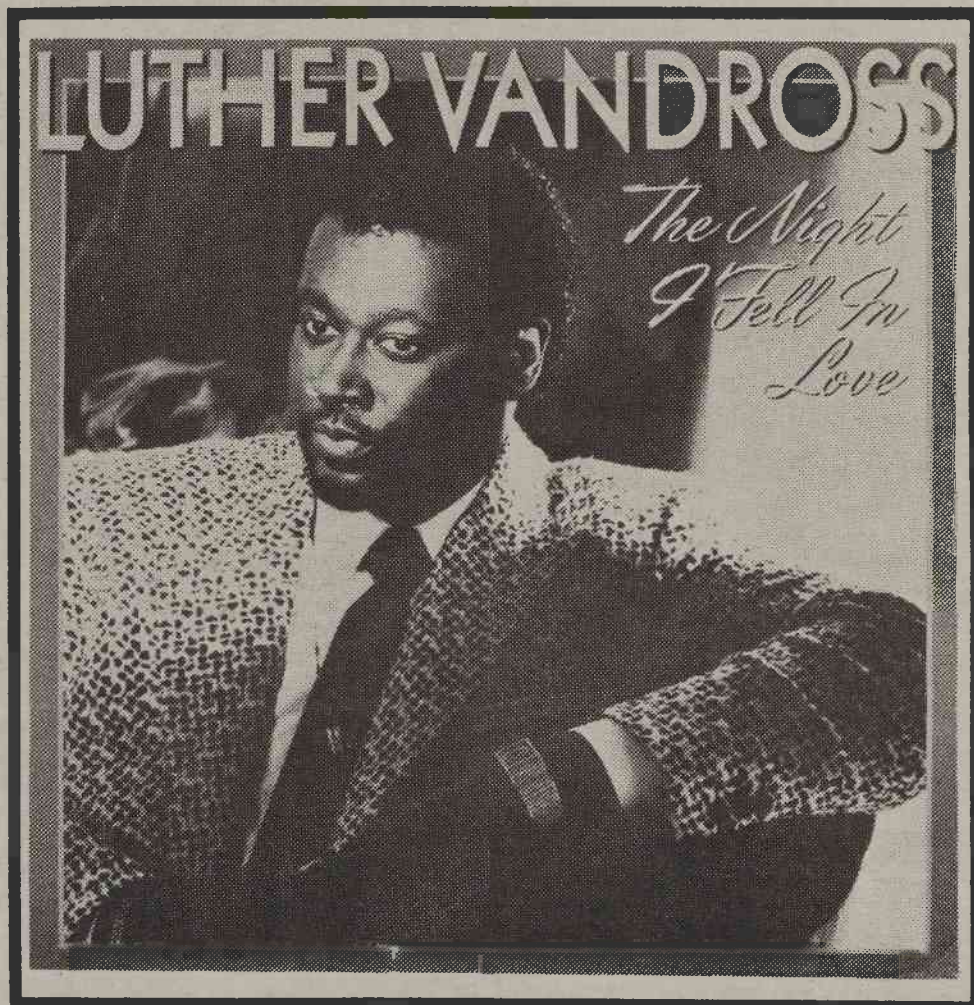
by Winfred Cross  
Staff Writer

If there is any doubt that Luther Vandross is one of the best male vocalists in the business, a good listen to his latest album, *The Night I Fell In Love*, should remove that doubt. Vandross' latest album is the best R&B album so far of 1985.

As with his past albums, Vandross continues to offer a good mix of sensuous ballads and jumping dance tunes. The album's opening song *Til My Baby*

If there is any doubt that Luther Vandross is one of the best male vocalists in the business, a good listen to his latest album, "The Night I Fell In Love", should remove that doubt. Vandross' latest album is the best R&B album so far of 1985.

As with his past albums, Vandross continues to offer a good mix of sensuous ballads and jumping dance tunes. The album's opening song "Till My Baby Comes Home," is a fine example of those dance tunes. It features some energetic background vocals and a spirited organ solo by Billy Preston. "It's Over Now," another dance tune, is the album's killer.



Vandross uses his tight rhythm section and voice to weave a hypnotic spell to lead you to the dance floor.

But it is Vandross's ballads that make the best listening and there are a number of good ones included. "Wait For Love" is a elegantly simple song that gives Vandross a chance to stretch his vocal cords a bit. And as usual, Vandross takes a classic song and remakes it in his own style.

This time he chose Stevie Wonder's "Creepin". Of course I prefer Stevie's version better because he did it first and, well, it's Stevie. But Vandross does a very nice job with the song nevertheless. He absolutely steals Brenda Russell's "If Only For One Night." The song is not quite a classic but Vandross sings it as if it is. The album ends with "The Other Side Of The World," a gorgeous ballad that is the perfect way to cap a completely satisfying album.

The most enjoyable aspect of this album is that Vandross continues to stay close to his R&B roots and chooses to ignore the fluffy pop that ruined Jeffrey Osborne's latest album. Vandross seems to be holding out on selling out. He's won the battle. I just hope he keeps up the fight.