

UKGOSPEL.COM Review July 2005

**PASTOR DAVID DANIEL & THE PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP CHOIR
PRAISE COMES FIRST**

Release: 2004

Get a Copy: Authentic media

When FOUR KORNERZ went to Germany last year, one of the things they found encouraging (and impressive) was the fact that this album was one of the few UK releases on sale at a store they happened upon.

PRAISE COMES FIRST is one of those albums that popped up absolutely everywhere in 2004 - more particularly outside of the usual, typical 'Black' outlets (not that there's anything wrong with that).

And there was a good reason for that. It was marketed and distributed by AUTHENTIC MEDIA. And that is a big, big deal, as AUTHENTIC - to borrow a tired old phrase - seem to be able to reach the parts that many others cannot.

And I suspect the AUTHENTIC marketing heads and number crunchers were happy to work the project for many reasons, most of which can be surmised in two broad parts: it is a strong product, and was probably seen as a superb example of quintessential UK Praise & Worship.

And - if that is taken as a given - it is difficult to argue the merits of the album because it is good. This is smooth, controlled P&W like the only Brits do it. Where the American brand of P&W happily dives in with abandon and unchecked exuberance (and ain't nothing wrong with that, thank you), UK vocals tend to be more rounded and fluid, even on the more rhythmic, lively numbers.

And - another typical UK trademark - PRAISE COMES FIRST's external influences abound: music from West Africa (AFRICAN MEDLEY), the inevitable Caribbean rhythm (via the very rootsy rendition of LET IT BE - not to be confused with the BEATLES track of the same name), and old school heads will love the EARTH, WIND & FIRE-esque groove of THE WORD (superb horn stabs), as many will probably find the lilting, laid back rhythm of SPEAK TO ME especially soothing.

This is an incredibly well-rounded collection of songs as well as a rare thing: one of those let-all-the-tracks-play, kind of a CD. It's difficult to pick out stand-outs because almost all the tracks serve effective but different purposes. First and foremost, this is a Praise & Worship album, and PCF do it extremely well.

Corporate vocals rarely get smoother than this, balancing collective voicing with a great relationship between arrangement and musicianship.

The leads are excellent - DAVID DANIEL is on lead duty for most of the project, but the vocal guests read like a South UK big talent catalogue: TONY MOMRELLE (SEVEN), RUTH LYNCH, and LAWRENCE JOHNSON (to mention just three).

The album deserves to do well, and I most sincerely hope it has. The writing is superb and deserves particular mention (DAVID DANIEL wrote six of the 14 tracks, and the other songs are sourced from some of the UK's finest: GRAHAM KENDRICK, RUTH LYNCH (again) and MARK BESWICK. That lineup alone oozes quality.

There are few downsides worth mentioning, and if good PRAISE & WORSHIP music is your thing, then you are more than likely not going to find much fault here. It's without doubt one of the strongest P&W releases of 2004. Pick one up.

TRACK LISTING

THIS IS MY DESIRE

HOW GREAT THOU ART

OLAM

ITS OVER

AFRICAN MEDLEY

LET IT BE

LET THE PRAISES GO FIRST

ONE FOR ALL

HOLY IS THE LORD

THE WORD

SPEAK TO ME

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

NEW THING NOW

THIS IS YOUR HOUSE (BONUS TRACK)

Producer: MARCUS JOHNSON