

Music

The Temptations are Ear Resistible

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Temptations are roaring into the 21st Century with their most romantic, most enticing, most soul satisfying suite of songs in the group's brilliant 40-year history. EAR RESISTIBLE represents the pinnacle of an art form, the sensuous melding of five masculine voices into heartfelt expressions of love cherished, love lost, love found. Love is the theme, and when it comes to emotional intimacy, no group sings with more passionate fire.

The fire fueling the Temptations' musical triumphs has been burning for four decades: In the sixties it was "My Girl"; in the seventies, "Papa Was a Rolling Stone"; in the eighties, "Treat Her Like a Lady"; and in the nineties, "Stay." In fact, Phoenix Rising, released in 1998, was the most successful project of the Temps' astoundingly successful career, with sales approaching two million. Now in 2000, EAR RESISTIBLE raises the standard



to a breathtakingly higher level. The Temptations have rewritten their own history with a record whose fresh beats and blends will delight a legion of loyal listeners while attracting new generations looking for real-deal soul singing. The Temps are contemporary

history. Contemporary because their ever-evolving sound is one of the wonders of pop entertainment. History because their proud lineage represents an important chapter in the chronicle of American music. "We work to blend the two," says Otis Williams, the original

Temptation who founded and still leads the group. "We have built on our history, we gain strength from our history, yet at the same time our style and our songs have never been more right-now, never more contemporary. We're still a vital part of the scene."

"When I tell people we are God's group," says Otis, a remarkably modest man, "I don't mean it arrogantly. It's just that we have been tested time and again and keep coming back. We have suffered the death of so many legendary singers - Paul Williams, David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks, Melvin Franklin. Others, like Dennis Edwards, Richard Street, Ali-Ollie Woodson and Theo Peoples, have left, and yet our unity is tighter, our sound brighter and our popularity greater. Someone has watched over this group. Someone has protected our integrity. Someone has said - just go on singing and it'll get better." The mythology of the Temptations is a permanent part of Americana.

And with EAR RESISTIBLE, the musical myth takes on new meaning. "We start out every project with a firm commitment to finding the right songs and right producers," Otis explains. "It's been that way since Smokey Robinson and Norman Whitfield supervised our hits, and it remains that way today. The Temptations are all about great songs sung by great singers." The irresistibility of EAR RESISTIBLE is rooted in an abundance of bedroom ballads. The songs smolder with intimations of sweet sexuality. "That's part of our legacy going as far back as the doo wop of the fifties," Otis recalls. "We grew up on the idea of wooing a woman through song. The beautiful ballad that praises your lady and asks for consent is certainly sexual, but even deeper. Sure, you want her body, but what you want most is her love, and there's nothing more sacred than that." A songwriter

(Please see 'Temptations' page 4)

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