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AMERICA

Classic Album Collection – The Capitol Years

Caroline CAROLR103CD (six discs)

Covering the six albums released for Capitol Records during 1979-85, this is an ideal companion to the earlier box dealing with the Warner Bros years, 1971-77. Although less successful in the 1980s, the duo hadn't lost any of their glossy, gorgeous sound, consistently a feast of harmonies sounding like a cross between Richie Furay/Timothy B Schmit-period Poco and – understandably – The Eagles (a pinnacle of soft rock, it must be remembered, that America pre-dated). All of the material has been remastered, two of the CDs include a brace of bonus tracks each, and a great booklet addresses the contributions of no less than Argent's legendary Russ Ballard. **KK**

Sound Quality: 85%



RHYTHM ART DUO

Carousel – Music For Percussion

Marten Recordings MRCD04

No, not a rival to Kodo drumming, but a stunning sonic experience from the Swedish speaker brand, Marten. Predominant here is the vibraphone, its chilling resonances ticking every high-end demonstration box, but also bells, triangles and other instruments that are mainly struck, bass, a lone vocal and flute solos I can relate to my wife's playing (now that's what I call an A/B comparison). Material comes from John Cage, Lou Harrison and Toru Takemitsu, and it's at times joyous, moody or even forbidding. This is an old-school audiophile release, straight out of the 1979 JVC/Sheffield Lab/Crystal Clear playbook. Maybe it's time the genre was reassessed? **KK**

Sound Quality: 85%



LIL'S MACKINTOSH

Celebrating The Art & Spirit of Music 4

STS Digital 6111104

Carousel isn't the only audiophile throwback CD this month: STS Digital continues its series of superbly-recorded titles with a wonderful 17-track set of standards by award-winning Dutch jazz vocalist Lil's Mackintosh. Dealing with the audiophile stuff first, STS provides a detailed listing of the equipment used in the session, even including the name of the rack supplier. As for the music, Mackintosh is a sublime stylist who deals respectfully with 'My Man', 'Cry Me A River', 'God Bless The Child' and others (showing a clear affinity for Billie Holiday) with a neat ability to slip into staggering impressions of myriad vocalists. This is a gem, so seek it out. **KK**

Sound Quality: 90%



CHET ATKINS

Superpickers/Picks The Best

Vocalion CDLK4610 (quadraphonic SACD)

Forgive the self-indulgence, but I just can't get enough of super-slinky guitarist Chet Atkins, and Vocalion has done us a huge favour by pairing these titles from 1967 and 1973. The Grammy-winning *Picks The Best* features his inimitable, country-flavoured takes on material including 'Colonel Bogey' from *Bridge On The River Kwai*, Marty Robbins' 'El Paso' and 'You'll Never Walk Alone' while on *Superpickers* he shares the studio with Nashville giants Weldon Myrick, Johnny Gimble, Charlie McCoy, Hargus Robbins and others. They work their magic on 'City Of New Orleans', 'Mr Bojangles', an eerie 'Sweet Dreams' and others in a languid style, both albums' surround-sound elements limited to the atmospheric. An absolute joy! **KK**

Sound Quality: 90%

