Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

Over the course of its 15-year history, Stax Records was home to a plethora of stars such as Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Booker T. & the MGs, the Staple Singers, Johnnie Taylor, and the Dramatics. As talented and great as the aforementioned artists were, none of them ultimately had the impact on black popular music that Isaac Hayes did from 1969 through 1975.

Hayes's story is one of epic proportions. In the mid- to late 1960s Isaac, and his songwriting and producing partner David Porter, played a seminal role in creating the nascent sound of soul music, writing and producing such genre-defining records as Sam and Dave's "Soul Man," "Hold On I'm Comin'," "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby," "Wrap It Up," and "I Thank You." In their spare time, the dynamic songwriting duo also penned hits for Carla Thomas, Johnnie Taylor, Ruby Johnson, the Soul Children, and Mable John. As a session man, Isaac played on dozens of additional hits. His songwriting, production, and session work alone would make Hayes worthy of any music hall of fame that one could possibly name.

Yet, as monumental as his contributions were in this first part of his career, they are dwarfed by the impact of his solo albums such as Hot Buttered Soul, Shaft, and Black Moses. With these records Hayes would become the biggest artist Stax ever produced and one of the most important artists in the history of rhythm and blues. From 1969 through 1975, he single-handedly redefined the sonic possibilities of black music, in the process opening up the album market as a commercially viable medium for black artists. The fact that one musician could be responsible for such disparate but equally great and influential music as Hayes produced in the 1960s and '70s simply boggles the imagination.

Hayes was born in Covington, Tennessee in 1942. By the time he came to Stax he had been singing or playing the piano in various bands around Memphis for a number of years, cutting his first single for Chips Moman's Youngstown label in late 1962. His first session at Stax was as the keyboardist in baritone saxophonist Floyd Newman's band in 1963. Impressed by Hayes's playing, Stax owner Jim Stewart began booking him for sessions while the company's regular keyboard player, Booker T. Jones, was off at college. Within two years Hayes had hooked up with David Porter and embarked on a writing and producing career.

As Isaac was becoming successful behind the scenes, he still entertained thoughts of a career as a performing artist. Stax executive Al Bell had similar ideas. "As a marketer I'd look at Isaac Hayes," mused Bell, "and [I'd] see him banging on the piano and [I] watched his approach which, in terms of the way he held his hands, was sort of like the kind of stuff I would see those

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

guys playing in the country and western bars, what I would see on television. Isaac looked like one of those guys [but] black. When he was working up material with Porter, I'd sit around and watch him writing. To me, he was a unique person. He had the bald head and he would come in with a purple shirt on and some pink pants and some lavender socks and some white shoes. There was this little club where I went one time and Isaac was in there playing on the organ and I decided, 'I've got to record this guy. I believe we can have us a huge, huge artist.'"

Hayes was initially a little reluctant but Bell finally coaxed him into the studio in January 1968 after a company party, accompaniment being provided by Al Jackson on drums and Duck Dunn on bass. According to both Bell and Hayes, all three musicians had imbibed at the party and were more than a little drunk. Not surprisingly, Isaac feels that the session did not capture him at his finest. Given that he had not planned to cut an album, no material had been prepared before the impromptu session. Instead the three musicians improvised as the tape rolled. The resulting album was entitled Presenting Isaac Hayes, its lead single, "Precious, Precious," being edited down from an 18-minute jazz-tinged funk vamp.

Both album and single sold poorly and that might have been the end of Hayes's solo career if fate had not intervened when Stax lost its complete back catalog upon severing its distribution deal with Atlantic Records in May 1968. In an audacious move, Al Bell decided in early 1969 to generate an instant back catalog by releasing 27 albums and 30 singles at once. To amass this amount of product, Bell had every one of the company's artists record new material and prevailed on session musicians, writers, and producers such as Steve Cropper and Isaac Hayes to record solo albums.

After the disappointment of Presenting Isaac Hayes, Isaac would agree to cut another album only if he had complete control.

"When I did Hot Buttered Soul," Hayes reflects, "I didn't give a damn if it didn't sell because I was going for the true artistic side, rather than looking at it for monetary value. I had an opportunity to express myself no holds barred, no restrictions, and that's why I did it. I took artistic and creative liberties. I felt what I had to say couldn't be said in two minutes and 30 seconds. So I just stretched [the songs] out and milked them for everything they were worth. I didn't feel any pressure that it had to sell because there were 26 other albums out there."

Only four songs were cut: an 18-minute version of Glen Campbell's Jimmy Webb-penned 1967 hit "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," a 12-minute version of Dionne Warwick's Burt

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

Bacharach and Hal David—authored "Walk on By," a nine-minute Hayes original that Al Bell called "Hyperbolicsyllabicsesquedalymistic," and a relatively short five-minute take on Memphis songwriters Charlie Chalmers and Sandy Rhodes's "One Woman." The length of the songs, the arrangements, the long rap that preceded "Phoenix," and Hayes's vocal style were all radically different from what was going on in mainstream R&B at the time.

It surprised many that the man who had cowritten such incendiary pieces of gospel-inspired soul as "Soul Man" and "Hold On I'm Comin" would record an album three-quarters of which he didn't write, and half of which were white pop tunes. It was quite a radical move.

"What it was, was the real me," proclaims Hayes. "I mean, OK, the real me had written those other songs ['Soul Man,' 'Hold On I'm Comin',' etc.], but they were being written for other people. As for me wanting to express myself as an artist, that's what Hot Buttered Soul was. Although I was a songwriter, there were some songs that I loved, that really touched me. Came the opportunity, I wanted to record these tunes. I wanted to do them the way that I wanted to do them. I took them apart, dissected them, and put them back together and made them my personal tunes. I took creative license to do that. By doing them my way, it almost made them like totally different songs all over again."

No 45s were originally envisioned for Hot Buttered Soul, and none were scheduled amongst the 30 singles that were released at the Stax sales meetings in the spring of 1969. Instead, Al Bell had planned to try and break the record as an album in Los Angeles, but to his surprise it was broken in Detroit by jazz disc jockey Sonny Carter on station WGPR-FM.

After Carter began spinning the disc, the reaction to Hot Buttered Soul in Detroit was so strong and instantaneous that Bell immediately realized that the record was potentially a gold mine. Isaac claims, "We were getting reports about people in Detroit burglarizing record shops and the only thing they'd take out was Hot Buttered Soul. That's making a statement!"

Intent on capitalizing on the album's success, Stax engineer Ronnie Capone quickly edited "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" and "Walk on By" for single release. "Phoenix" appears here in its edited form while "Walk on By" appears in its full-length album version. Both songs combine aspects of jazz improvisation, classically-influenced string arrangements, rock guitar, ballad singing, and R&B rhythm.

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

The results of such a post-modern mélange manifested themselves in no uncertain terms in the marketplace. Hot Buttered Soul sold over one million copies, an unprecedented showing for what was nominally an R&B album. Equally unprecedented was the fact that the album placed in the upper reaches of all four charts—jazz, pop, R&B, and easy listening—simultaneously, a feat no other artist had ever achieved! In fact, Hayes virtually owned the jazz charts for the next few years. Hot Buttered Soul flitted back and forth between the #2 and #1 spots on Billboard's jazz LP charts for over eight months. A year and a half after it was released, it was still in the jazz Top Ten, joined by Hayes's next two albums, The Isaac Hayes Movement and To Be Continued.

Up to the release of Hot Buttered Soul, virtually everyone in the record industry had assumed that the black audience was neither economically equipped nor aesthetically interested in purchasing LPs in large numbers. Consequently black artists were not afforded the luxuries enjoyed by their white counterparts in crafting extended songs or album concepts. Instead, most black LPs were hurriedly and cheaply recorded to capitalize on a string of hit singles. Little thought, effort, or expense was put into cover art design or marketing. Hot Buttered Soul unquestionably proved that black artists could sell LPs, and single-handedly revolutionized the notion of the length and musical palette appropriate for black artists. Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, and Funkadelic would all follow Hayes's lead and, over the next few years, all four would record a series of utterly brilliant albums.

The Isaac Hayes Movement and To Be Continued, for all intents and purposes, formed a trilogy with Hot Buttered Soul. All three records featured extended, dramatic, heavily orchestrated rearrangements of pop and R&B songs recast by Hayes in his own image. The full-length album version of his titanic cover of Jerry Butler's "I Stand Accused" is included here from The Isaac Hayes Movement while To Be Continued is represented by the single edit of Bacharach-David's "The Look of Love," which had previously been a hit for both Dusty Springfield and Sergio Mendes. In the last few years Isaac's version of "The Look of Love" has been sampled by both Jay-Z and Ashanti. For my money, "I Stand Accused," sampled by Mystikal on "I'm Throwed Off," is Isaac's finest moment as a singer.

"That was where I wanted to take it down to, as we call it, First Baptist Church," smiles Hayes. The interplay between Pat Lewis's ethereal background vocal lines and Michael Toles's circular gospel guitar lick is pure alchemical magic.

In 1971 Isaac was commissioned to write the score for Gordon Parks's Shaft, one of the first so-called "blaxploitation" flicks. The resulting double album and the "Theme from Shaft" single were directly responsible for kick-starting disco and the phenomenon of the black soundtrack.

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

The 45 also earned Hayes both Academy and Grammy Awards and boosted his position as an African-American icon to the point where he was proclaimed Black Moses. Sporting a bald pate and wearing chains onstage, Hayes became an important symbol of black achievement and possibility.

The score to Shaft contains numerous highlights, not least among them is the incredibly moving "Soulsville," and the 19-plus-minute funk vamp that filled all of side 4 of the soundtrack album entitled "Do Your Thing" (the edited single version of "Do Your Thing" is included here). For most people, though, the film, Isaac Hayes, and the blaxploitation era are inextricably wedded to the title song, "Theme from Shaft." Released as a single in September 1971 two months after the album was on the market, "Theme from Shaft" contains an inordinate number of hooks. The two that are invariably the most indelibly etched into the listener's cranium are the sixteenth-note hi-hat riff and the wah-wah rhythm guitar part that are heard virtually from the beginning to the end on the track. Both licks were recycled endlessly during the disco era.

Hayes had first used the hi-hat lick on the break in the final section of Otis Redding's 1966 recording of "Try a Little Tenderness." The wah-wah part had come about sometime earlier when Hayes and guitarist Charles "Skip" Pitts were working on a long-forgotten track that was never released.

"It was just one continuous thing that never went anywhere," recalls Isaac. "But I liked the sound and said, 'Okay, we'll tape this. We're gonna put this on file and just use it later.' When it was time to do the 'Theme,' I was told Shaft was a relentless character, always moving all the time, never stopping. I said, 'Hmm, what can we do? The hi-hat could be the underlying thing but I need some other thing.' I went back and pulled that tape out and said, 'Skip, come here a minute. Play this lick.' He played that lick and it fit so perfectly."

Topping it all off were the incredibly dramatic string parts. To integrate the film's main theme with the rest of the soundtrack, Hayes ingeniously added elements to "Theme from Shaft" heard later in the score: The opening flute line was derived from "Bumpy's Lament" while the French horn part comes from "Ellie's Love Theme."

The Shaft album went to number one on both the pop and R&B album charts, staying on the pop listings for a staggering 60 weeks. The single, "Theme from Shaft," also went number one pop, although, oddly enough, it only made it to the number two spot on the R&B charts.

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

"Theme from Shaft" went on to win two Grammy Awards that year: Isaac and Johnny Allen won in the "Best Instrumental Arrangement" category; and Dave Purple, Ron Capone, and Henry Bush won in the "Best Engineered Recording category." Isaac also won a Grammy for the album in the "Best Original Score Written for a Motion Picture" category. Even bigger than the Grammies was the Academy Award Hayes walked away with on April 10, 1972 for the "Best Song" category.

The success of Hayes's score for Shaft opened up Hollywood to black composers and the record industry to black soundtracks. Soon thereafter Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, Joe Simon, James Brown, and Bobby Womack were all hired to write the scores for what became an epidemic of blaxploitation flicks. In essence, Isaac Hayes and Shaft created the phenomenon of the R&B soundtrack. Shaft and its follow-up, November's Black Moses, were also the first nonlive or greatest-hits double album releases by an R&B artist. It had been only two short years earlier that Hayes had demonstrated unequivocally that black Americans would purchase full-length albums in large numbers. He was now demonstrating that they would also buy multi-disc sets if the material warranted the expenditure. Double-pocket sets soon followed by Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, and Funkadelic.

Hot Buttered Soul, The Isaac Hayes Movement, and To Be Continued had been comprised of extended and extensive reworkings of pop and R&B songs that had been hits for others. Whether Hayes tackled Glen Campbell's "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," the Beatles' "Something," or Jerry Butler's "I Stand Accused," the original tunes were so substantially reinterpreted that, for all intents and purposes, Hayes had rewritten them. The soundtrack to Shaft was a very different project. Here, Isaac was once again writing original material, in this case geared to scenes, characters, and dialogue in a film not of his own making.

For Black Moses, Hayes returned to covering other people's songs, the lone exception being the sexually charged "Good Love," which he co-wrote with trumpeter Mickey Gregory. "Part-Time Love" had originally been recorded by labelmate Luther Ingram while "Need to Belong to Someone" had been an R&B hit for both Jerry Butler in 1964 and Laura Lee in 1968. "For the Good Times," written by Kris Kristofferson, had been a #1 country hit for Ray Price a year prior to the Black Moses sessions. In Isaac's hands, the song became pure country soul.

In March 1972 Isaac released an instrumental cover of Al Green's "Let's Stay Together," providing a vehicle to show off his alto saxophone skills. A month later he reunited with his former songwriting partner David Porter, releasing a 45 featuring on the A-side a rollicking

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

version of "Ain't That Loving You Baby," a Homer Banks–Allen Jones song originally written for Johnnie Taylor, with a cover of the white pop group Bread's fall 1971 smash "Baby I'm-A Want You" on the B-side.

The last week of September 1972 found Hayes, alongside labelmates the Staple Singers, Luther Ingram, and Johnnie Taylor, performing at Jesse Jackson's annual PUSH EXPO at Chicago's International Amphitheater. From Isaac's show-closing performance, we have included three previously unreleased tracks on this compilation. Kenny Gamble and Thom Bell's "A Brand New Me" had originally been recorded for Black Moses while Isaac would cover Luther Ingram's "If Loving You Is Wrong (I Don't Want to Be Right)" as the non-LP B-side of March 1973's "Rolling Down a Mountainside." The real kicker from the PUSH show, though, is Isaac's dramatic heartfelt performance of the old Baptist hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow." Though he had been steeped in gospel music from his earliest years, this is the only extant example of Black Moses singing religious material.

In 1973, Isaac began to move away from interpreting other people's material. In their place he began writing long extended grooves, as often as not composed in the studio out of post-midnight jam sessions with the members of his group the Movement. All but two of the remaining eleven tracks on this compilation are Hayes originals and, significantly, one of the exceptions, the set-closing medley of "By the Time I Get to Phoenix/Say a Little Prayer," was a live concert recording with Dionne Warwick on which the two R&B stalwarts reprised earlier hits. The other exception is Isaac's cover of Henry Glover's "Someone Made You for Me," originally released as the B-side of his last hit at Stax, "Wonderful."

As "Wonderful" worked its way up to the #18 slot on the R&B charts, Isaac was beginning to distance himself from Stax. In January he demanded to renegotiate his contract with the company and a few months later he bought a studio across town that he dubbed Hot Buttered Soul. In between he cut the soundtrack for Three Tough Guys. The title theme was issued as a single, struggling its way to #72 on the R&B charts. Despite the disappointing sales performance of both the single and the album, over the years the soundtrack has become a favorite of a number of rap artists. "Run Faye Run" in particular has been sampled an inordinate number of times. It was also included in the soundtrack to Kill Bill, vol. 1 while the "Title Theme" from Three Tough Guys was licensed for Kill Bill, vol. 2. In July 1974, Isaac issued the soundtrack to yet another blaxploitation film, Truck Turner.

By that point Stax was undergoing what would ultimately be paralyzing financial problems. Unable to meet the financial terms of Isaac's contract, the label was forced to give him his release in September. Hayes immediately negotiated a handsome deal with ABC Records, part

Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

of which included the creation of his own Hot Buttered Soul label. Between 1975 and 1977, Isaac released five albums on Hot Buttered Soul including the all-instrumental platter Disco Connection.

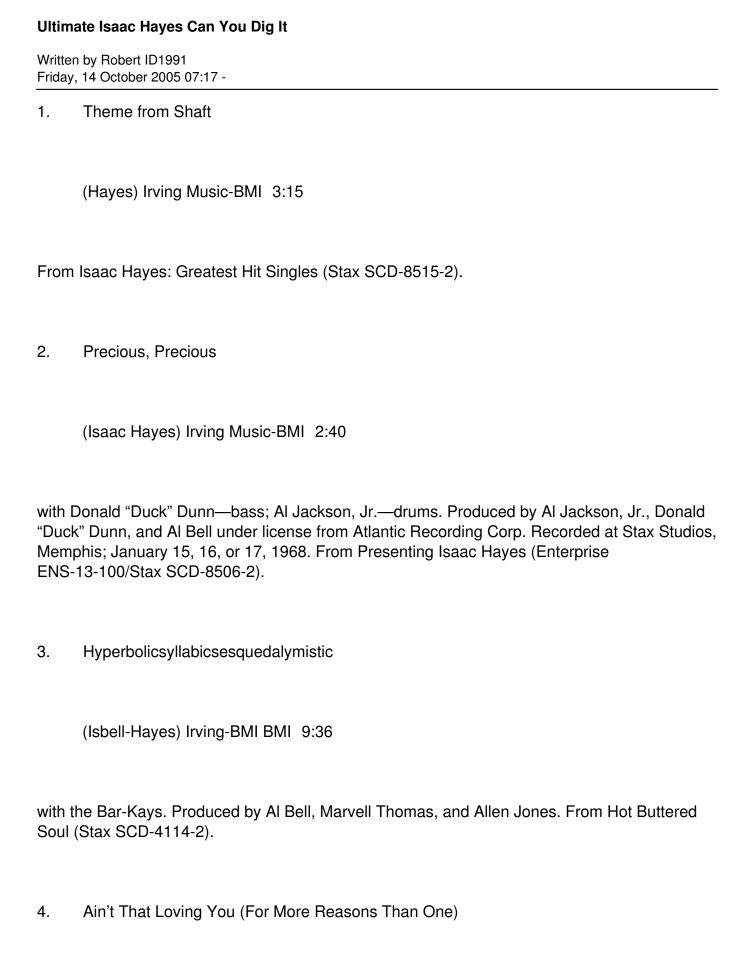
Isaac's debut HBS album, Chocolate Chip, stormed its way to the top of the R&B charts while also managing to penetrate the pop Top 20. The two singles from the album, the razor-sharp "Chocolate Chip" and the languid ballad "Come Live with Me," both managed to go Top 20 R&B but neither single was able to garner any significant pop airplay. Three further HBS singles, "Disco Connection," "Rock Me Easy Baby (Part 1)," and the aforementioned duet with Dionne Warwick, "By the Time I Get to Phoenix/I Say a Little Prayer" (all included here in their single edits), managed to reach the lower rungs of the R&B chart. Clearly ABC did not know how to reach the R&B market and Isaac suffered accordingly.

By the end of the decade Hayes's fortunes would turn around with his singles once again reaching the top of the R&B chart after he signed a new deal with Polydor. With the exception of an album for Columbia in 1986 (which produced the Top Ten R&B hit "Ike's Rap"), a 1992 single with Barry White, and a pair of albums for Virgin in 1995, Hayes spent most of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s developing an acting career, starring in movies such as Escape from New York and I'm Gonna Get You Sucka and appearing semi-regularly in The Rockford Files. While largely absent from the music industry, much of his funkier writing was extensively sampled by rap artists as Hayes became a musical hero with extensive influence on artists who were not even born when he originally created his most important work.

In 1997 Hayes landed the part as the voice of Chef in the animated late-night series South Park. When the latter blew up with the teenage set, Hayes once again achieved prominence as a contemporary icon of popular culture. In 2002 he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Can you dig it? —Rob Bowman July 2005

Rob Bowman is a Grammy Award–winning author of Soulsville U.S.A.: The Story of Stax Records. He would like to thank both Al Bell and Isaac Hayes for taking their time to share their memories.

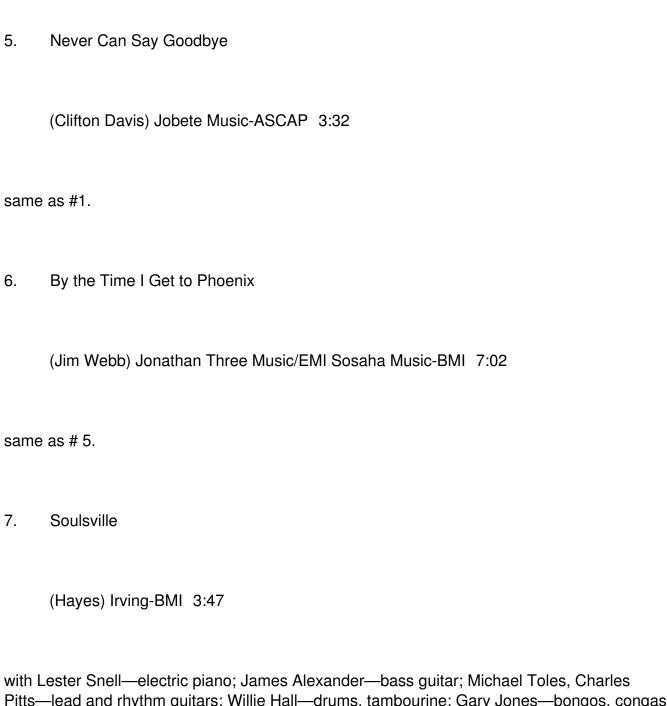
Disc One



(Banks-Jones) Irving-BMI 4:28

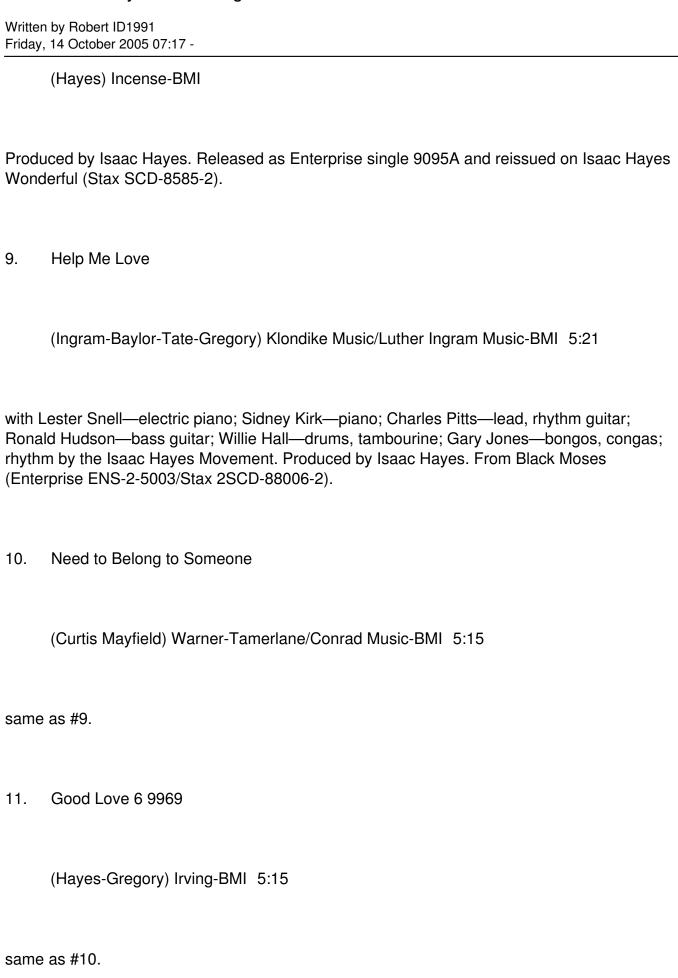
Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

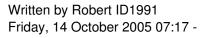
with David Porter. Produced by Isaac Hayes. Released as Enterprise single 9049A and reissued on The Best of Isaac Hayes, vol. 1 (Stax FCD-60-001).



with Lester Snell—electric piano; James Alexander—bass guitar; Michael Toles, Charles Pitts—lead and rhythm guitars; Willie Hall—drums, tambourine; Gary Jones—bongos, congas; the Bar-Kays and the Movement—rhythm section; plus the Memphis Strings & Horns arranged by Isaac Hayes. Produced by Isaac Hayes. From Shaft (Stax SCD-88002-2).

8. Wonderful 3:37







(Bacharach-David) Colgems-EMI Music-ASCAP 3:18

with Bill Bell, Jackie Thomas—trombones; Ernie Bernhardt, John Davis—trumpets; Richard Dolph, Joe D'Gerolamo—French horns; Nick Vergos—oboe, English horn; Jack Fonville, Ed Hubbard, Jim Terry—flutes; Ed Freudberg, Joan Gilbert, Noel Gilbert, Gloria Hendricks, Hal Saunders, Ann Spurbeck, Robert Snyder, John Wehlan—violins; Nino Ravarino, Mary Snyder—violas; Vincent de Frank, Barbara Thompson—cellos; Cliff Acred—bass; background voices by Hot, Buttered & Soul (arr. by.Pat Lewis). Produced by Isaac Hayes. From To Be Continued (Enterprise ENS-1014/Stax SCD-4133-2).

13. Do Your Thing

(Hayes) Irving-BMI 3:16

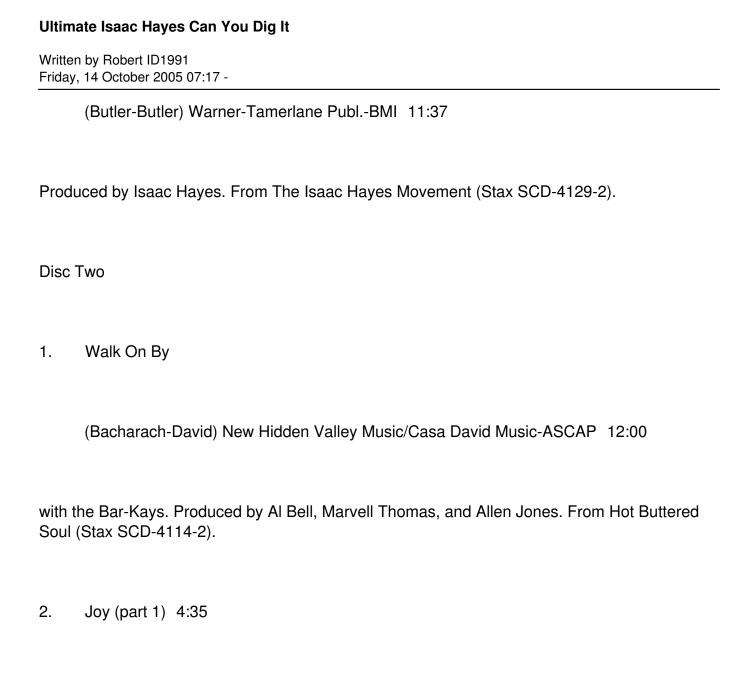
same as #6.

14. For the Good Times

(Kris Kristofferson) Careers-BMG Music Publ.-BMI 5:20

same as #11.

15. I Stand Accused



(Hayes) Irving/Incense-BMI

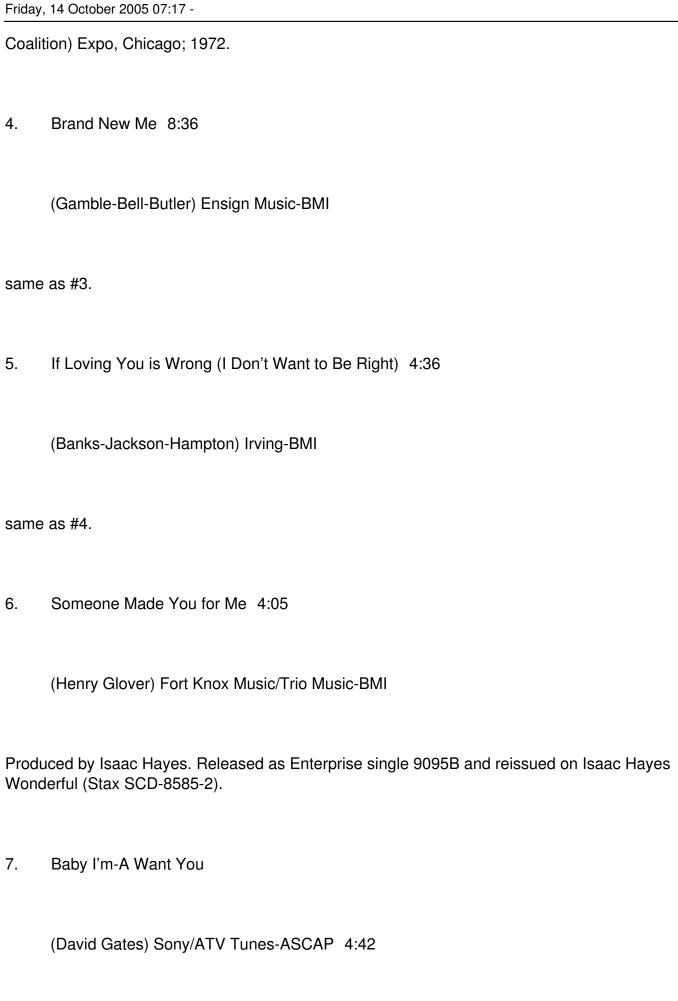
From Isaac Hayes: Greatest Hit Singles (Stax SCD-8515-2).

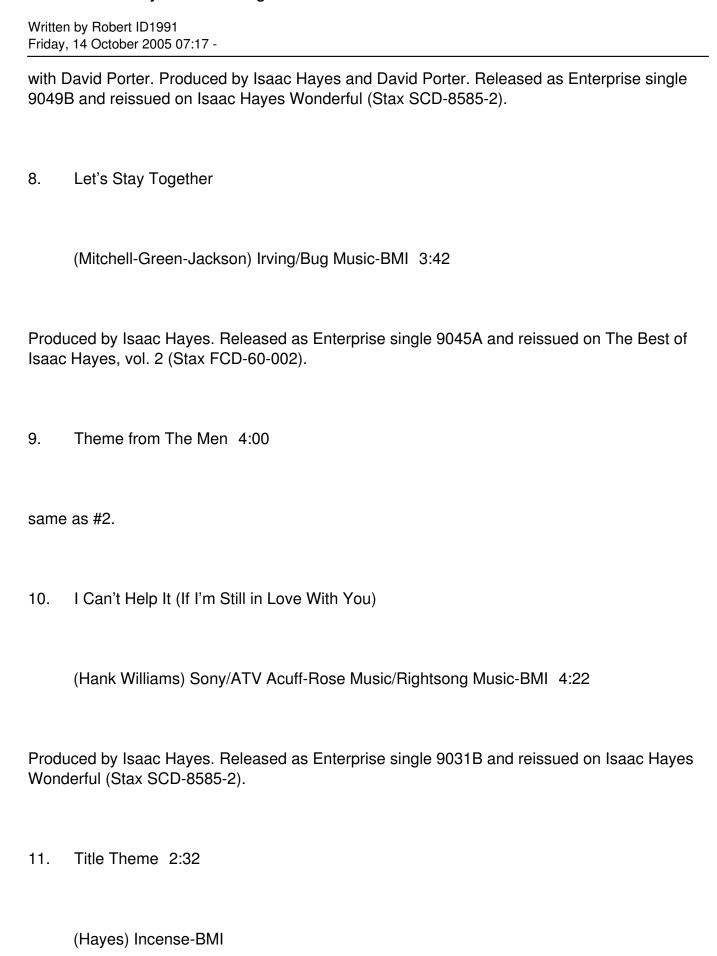
3. His Eye Is on the Sparrow

(trad.) P.D. 4:20

From the Rev. Jesse Jackson's PUSH (People United to Save Humanity, aka Rainbow/PUSH

Written by Robert ID1991



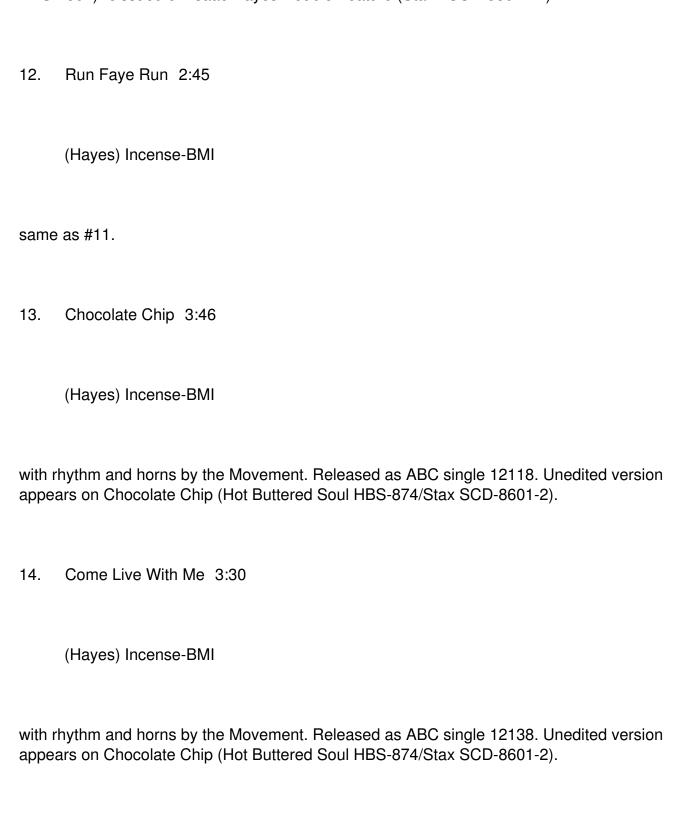


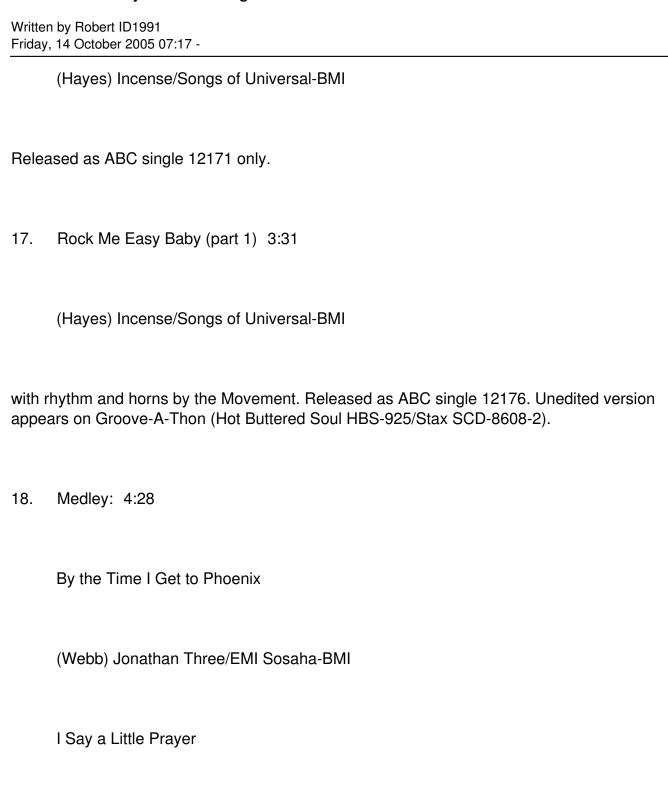
Written by Robert ID1991 Friday, 14 October 2005 07:17 -

15.

Disco Connection 3:38

with rhythm by the Isaac Hayes Movement, strings by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. Recorded at Hot Buttered Soul Recording Studio, Memphis. From Tough Guys (Enterprise ENS-7504) reissued on Isaac Hayes Double Feature (Stax 2SCD-88014-2).





with Hot Buttered Soul Unlimited; Isaac Hayes Movement; the Warwick singers; the Dionne Warwick rhythm section; and featuring the Atlantic International Orchestra. Produced by Isaac Hayes and Dionne Warwick. Recorded live at the Fabulous Fox, Atlanta, Georgia. From A Man and a Woman (ABC 613).

(Bacharach-David) Casa David Music/New Hidden Valley Music-ASCAP

