

Listen Out For 2015 Page

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soul power featuring rasheed ali - 1968!

Soul Power is an album which was very kindly sent to me by Bill Buckley from his (and Charles Waring's) fine <http://www.soulandjazzandfunk.com/> website. Bill has fine taste, so anything recommended by him or Charles, I take very seriously. After I first listened to the album, my first thought was 'Groove!' I re-listened to the album for a week or so, and it really has grown on me. The drive within the music is almost relentless, which is a perfect reflection of that era. If anything, cherry-picking one year, across that period of history, is almost unnecessary, as the injustices that led up to that year, passed throughout 1968, and are, unfortunately, appropriate in 2015. Some 45 years after that date, we are still looking at Black people being beaten for standing someplace, whilst a White racist is bought a takeaway after murdering 9 church-goers. I may be digressing, however, at times, culture reflects the politic of any one point in time. As with Gregory Porter's anthemic '1960, What?', the music becomes the tapestry the politic is etched upon. Gregory's track was not reflective of 1960, musically, but it carried the frenetic message with power and conviction. The creator of 'Soul Power', Rasheed Ali, has created another powerful message, whose own tapestry is perhaps, musically, etched on a Blaxploitation canvass, Whilst listening to this fine 18 track set, I was, obliquely, reminded of the 'death penalty' concept album 'Stay Human', which Michael Franti brought to us some 15 years ago now. I can hear Rasheed's Randy Muller/Jeff Lane-esque influences running throughout. Echoes of Mark Radice and Spiders Webb woven into the 1968, Mexico Olympics, Tommie Smith and John Carlos Black Power salutes (which I remember watching as a young teenager at the time on our Black and White television set). In 1968, U.S. politics were a confusing mess to myself. It seemed, if they found anyone in politics the people liked, there would be someone there, someplace, to kill them, and they did just that. To hear an artist working with this era in 2015, is hugely refreshing. I know many of my contemporaries who will love is album. I do myself, and how appropriate that it has been released following the atrocity in Charleston. 1960 begat 1968 begat 2015 etc. Cherry picking a track from this fine album is, perhaps, an unfair thing to do, as this is almost a symphony on it's own, however, of the 'movements' which comprise sections of the overall sum of it's parts, well I do love 'Not My Baby', 'Burn, Baby, Burn', 'Just Make It Funky' and 'Soul Power'. Having just cherry picked those tracks, I have been unfair to all of the other musical components. Overall, possibly, the most important release of 2015, thus far. More 'Power' to your political elbow, Rasheed. Thank you to Bill & Charles for turning me onto this set, and to [PY](#) for playing this fine release on his [Jazz FM Saturday show](#).

