

## WALTER CHRISTOPHER; The Mellisonant Album (AVH)

Written by Bill B

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Harlem's Walter Christopher is a proper old fashioned soul singer whose ambition is to make "music that is easy on the ear"... "mellisonant", if you would, and on this, his fifth album I believe, he certainly delivers. There's nothing here that's not easy on the ear but that's not say the album is bland and lifeless. On the contrary, the concise ten tracker demands total attention throughout; it's one of those albums that makes the remote, with its back and forward buttons, redundant. Why? Well, for a kick off all the songs are good 'uns... proper songs like those written by people like Luther Vandross, Will Downing and their ilk... you know, with a beginning, a middle and end; decent lyrics and sweet, catchy melodies. Then there's the players. Walter uses top session men like bassist Hubert Eaves IV and sax man Dave Watson and they know how to garnish those lovely songs. Finally there's Walt's great old school falsetto soul voice. His committed delivery should call to mind people like Howard Hewett and Philip Bailey.

Hear the Bailey connection on the lyric-less title cut that tops and tails the LP... shades of classic EWF slow jams. There's a touch of Phil too, on the lovely 'Feels So Good'. Go to 'Just Us Two' to hear the Howard Hewett flavours. This one's a superb, quiet storm classic... perfect if you want a fresh, un-clichéd Valentines moment. Quite lovely. 'Falling In Love' is another sweet romantic opus... coming in two flavours – an early, orthodox reading and a later heavier treatment.

For the more energetic there's a choppy 'You're The Best'. This features some great sax from

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Dave Watson (Alicia Keys' sax player of choice, I think). The mid tempo 'You're Beautiful' is tight too. 'Splendor' is another very sedate foot tapper while 'Sexy Cool' is different again. This cut is a loping jazz swinger with a walking bass line like Van Morrison's 'Moondance'. It's possibly the bravest track on the album simply because it would take a brave DJ to play it out... but it's a delight. If you've got soul you'll love the brief jazz guitar interlude and the lovely tinkling vibes. Yep, easy on the old ear... 'Mellisonant' indeed!

(BB) 4/5