

Mp3 Asha Puthli - Urban/r&b: Soul



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The debut 1973 CBS album by legendary jazz soul recording artist Asha Puthli is finally available on CD, produced by Del Newman 9 MP3 Songs URBAN/R&B: Soul, JAZZ: Acid Jazz Details: ALL MUSIC GUIDE review - "Asha Puthli" (1973) The debut long-player by Indian-born and Euro-bred soul singer Asha Puthli is a wild mix of electric, funky grooves and mystic spaceship R&B. Puthli, who contributed vocals to Ornette Coleman's Science Fiction album, and Columbia tried to establish herself as an international pop star with this album. Utilizing her wide range and weird voice and an even stranger choice of material, Puthli came off as some soul singer turned sexy jazz maven who was beating a slick path to the dancefloor with sensibility not unlike Donna Summer's a few years later. This isn't so odd in and of itself, but when you consider her song choices: George Harrison's "I Dig Love," J.J. Cale's "Right Down Here" and "Lies," Jimmy Webb's "This Is Your Life," and Jim Weatherly's "Neither One Of Us Wants to Be the First to Say Goodbye," among others, and arrangements and backing that don't even closely resemble the originals, you have one very strange album. The best track is "Lies," which is full of screaming, wailing, yelling, and completely freakazoid echo, compression, and phase shifter effects -- before Giorgio Moroder made them standard on every record. Puthli's jazzed-up rendition of Neil Sedaka's "I Am a Song" that steams over into an anthemic disco romp is a riot. This may be an album of its time, but Puthli is an original as a singer. She's a stylist at the very least, and, at most, a campy genius. - Thom Jurek, All Music Guide Asha Puthli is one of the most successful vocalists ever to come out of India. Jazz fans exalt her as a legend for her daredevil vocals on the Science Fiction album by free jazz iconoclast ORNETTE COLEMAN. But with ten solo albums under her belt for labels like EMI, CBS/Sony, and RCA, Asha is a cosmopolitan pioneer of jazz-inspired funk, soul and electronic dance music. Trained in Indian classical singing and jazz improvising, Asha Puthli created her own unique

sound in the 1970s - soft, slinky, sexy, meditative, and chilled out. Captured on classic recordings like "Space Talk" and "Say Yes," that distinctively cool sound prefigured the entire rise of acid jazz, ambient dance and neo-soul music. Today, as Asha Puthli prepares to release new material, her songs are being rediscovered by legions of hip-hop, neo-soul, nu-jazz, and electronica fans. Asha's underground 1970s albums have become popular hip-hop break records, sampled by the likes of THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G., DIDDY, JAY-Z, THE NEPTUNES, JERMAINE DUPRI, JAGGED EDGE, SWV, J-WALK, GOVERNOR feat. 50 CENT, DILATED PEOPLES, REDMAN, and THE ABORIGINALS; and her cover of George Harrison's "I Dig Love" was sampled by visionary producer and remixer DIPLO for the chart-topping track "Reloaded" by last year's UK Mobo award winner KANO. Asha also co-wrote and sings the lead vocal on STRATUS's "Looking Glass" which charted in the UK in 2005. Asha's solo recordings have been produced by the likes of DEL NEWMAN, who produced Elton John's "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" and TEO MACERO, who produced MILES DAVIS' "Bitches Brew." She has also produced and co-written many of her recognized hits. A quick glance at some of the artists with whom she has recorded, sung or shared the stage is a testament to her eclecticism: ALICE COLTRANE, ROY AYERS, HENRY THREADGILL, GRACE JONES, SONNY ROLLINS, CHARLIE HADEN, BILL LASWELL, PATTI SMITH, DON CHERRY, FREDDIE HUBBARD, THE ROLLING STONES, ASHFORD SIMPSON AND DJANGO REINHARDT. FROM INDIA TO NEW YORK Born and raised in Bombay, Asha began training at an early age in Indian classical and European opera. Stifled by classical music's rigidity, Asha gravitated to western popular music emanating from her home radio. From Voice of America she consumed jazz masters like Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole, and she became acculturated to British and American pop singers like Dusty Springfield and Cliff Richard through Sri Lanka's Radio Ceylon. Though her parents didn't initially support her musical ambitions, she won a competition at thirteen singing "Malaguena," which gave her the encouragement some years later to begin improvising with a jazz band at local tea dances. According to VED MEHTA, who chronicled the nascent Bombay jazz scene in The New Yorker and his classic book Jazz in India, most Indian hopefuls approached jazz awkwardly as if it was a second language. Asha, on the other hand, distinguished herself by delivering standards like "My Funny Valentine" with passion so fierce and technical aptitude so uncanny that many erroneously assumed she had learned to sing jazz in the United States. Asha's special gift is her sultry, four-octave soprano that has been described by scholar Niranjana Jhaveri in the following manner: "The ability to manipulate her voice

and to introduce certain glissando effects embellishments and textures descend directly from Asha's training in the Indian classical idiom. Her improvisations are the envy of the best instrumental technicians in jazz." Harboring an extraordinary natural talent, Asha knew early on that she had to migrate to the nation that birthed the music she loved. ASHA AND FREE JAZZ Asha made her way to New York under the auspices of a dance scholarship from Martha Graham. As luck would have it, Columbia Records impresario JOHN HAMMOND, who had forged a brilliant career discovering acts like Billie Holiday, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen, became intrigued by Ved Mehta's portrait of Asha in Jazz in India. After hearing a rough demo, Hammond championed her as a genius and vigorously recruited her for CBS Records. Unable to find a place for the jazz singer at his increasingly rock-oriented label, Hammond nonetheless used his connections to get her top-flight session work. She sang lead vocals on the Peter Ivers Blues Band's cover of "Ain't That Peculiar" which made a critical splash in magazines like Cashbox and Billboard. Hammond fortuitously sent her to audition for avant-garde pioneer ORNETTE COLEMAN, who'd been searching to no avail for a unique singer for his Science Fiction project. A quick study, Asha learned and recorded two of Coleman's songs, "What Reason Could I Give" and "All My Life," in mere hours. Historian Robert Palmer gushed about Asha's sound: "A sound like Raga meeting Aretha Franklin, Miss Puthli's singing is equally extraordinary. There is just enough Indian training left in her style to give it an indescribable fluid quality. Her alternation of timbre from the breathiest of sighs to gospel derived moans is unique. She improvises off an impressive range and generally walks through the album with the assurance of a master performer." For her work on Science Fiction, Asha shared the highly prestigious Downbeat Critics' Poll award for "best female jazz vocalist," alongside Ella Fitzgerald and Dee Dee Bridgewater. ASHA GOES SOLO Asha's commercial promise flourished in Europe, where she was promptly signed to a record deal by CBS honcho DICK ASHER. Mostly unreleased in the US, Asha's series of inventive solo albums, in which she also delves into writing and producing, reflect the young singer's burgeoning interest in pop, rock, soul, funk and disco. Seeking creative freedom in her music and style, Asha naturally gravitated to glam, a scene populated by fashion-conscious provocateurs like Elton John and T-Rex. Her self-titled debut was produced by DEL NEWMAN, famous for his glitter rock treatment of Elton John's Goodbye Yellow Brick Road and it featured languorous pop soul covers of tunes by J.J. Cale, Bill Withers, and others. She also recruited PIERRE LA ROCHE, David Bowie and Freddie Mercury's makeup artist, and glam photographer MICK ROCK to shoot the cover. Her illustrious follow-up

She Loves to Hear the Music continued in the vein of her debut; and her third solo album, *The Devil is Loose*, was hailed as an instant classic by the *New York Times* and racked up gold sales. Thom Jurek of *allmusic* praises the psychedelic glam record as "a masterpiece of snakey, spaced-out soul and pre-mainstream disco." Asha's sensual, Eastern-influenced cooing over bass-driven grooves on original songs like "Flying Fish" and "Space Talk" was the precursors to breathy disco hits like "I Feel Love" and "Love to Love You Baby," and they provided the sonic template for future electronica and femme pop hits by Blondie, Ofra Haza, Kylie Minogue and others. With songs like "I'm Gonna Dance," her disco album, *L'Indiana*, was also celebrated by fans and critics. Recognized in critical circles as a "fusion pioneer," Asha's distinctive, unusual recordings predate fusion of east and west celebrated today in styles like hip-hop, worldbeat, bhangra, and electronica by almost twenty years.

FILMS, FASHION AND ELECTRONICA During the 1970s, Asha also branched out into films, starring in lead roles in movies by LOUIS MALLE, MERCHANT-IVORY and BRUNO CORBUCCI. Her cosmopolitan sense of glamour rocketed her to visibility as a fashion icon: a Studio 54 headliner, she was dressed by A-list designers from BOB MACKIE to MANOLO BLAHNIK, and photographed by iconic lensers from RICHARD AVEDON to ANDY WARHOL. The new millenium saw Asha re-emerged as an in-demand guest artist on the electronica circuit, appearing on funk experimentalist BILL LASWELL's *Asana Vol. 3*, "Hey Diwani, Hey Diwani" with techno-fusion group DUM DUM PROJECT, and a variety of rare groove and yoga music collections. In 2006, she appears on Laswell's *Asana OHM Shanti*, an album that also features KARSH KALE, PHAROAH SANDERS, GRANDMASTER DXT and USTAD SULTAN KHAN.

NEW PROJECTS Asha is currently working on a new full-length album, and it's already attracting some of the industry's most successful musicians and producers. The album will be Asha's first solo release to receive mainstream visibility in the United States. She is also completing a remix project of her classic songs, and in 2006 will be appearing live for the first time in years in major US and European venues. Expect a dance music single from Asha in Summer 2006. Like her mentor Ornette Coleman, Asha Puthli has always been ahead of her time, and now, thirty-five years after her debut, she is finally taking her rightful place in the pantheon of jazz legends and fusion trailblazers. There's a laundry list of artists who traded in their artistic vision in exchange for mainstream visibility. But Asha has forged a unique path ahead by steadfastly holding on to her freedom.

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