

•DJ•O•DUB•
•PRESENTS•

DEEP COVERS

I think my love of covers stems from a hip-hop mentality where I see them as proto-remixes. In both cases, the new song usually retains elements of the original that maintain some level of familiarity but also create something fresh and original in the making. For this mix-CD, I went through my collection and pulled out some of my favorite covers from across the musical spectrum. In some cases, I went strictly on the basis of quality songs that would have stood out regardless if you know they were covers or not, such as the cover of Claire Fischer's latin ballad "Morning". Other times, I picked great songs that I also enjoy because they are surprising and unexpected, like a reggae version of James Brown's "The Big Payback." Either way, you have over 20 choice cuts to choose from hope you enjoy. O-Dub.



After the brief **Intro**, the first song I begin with is **Rod Piazza's "Cissy Strut,"** one of the many fine covers of the Meters' funk classic. It was a struggle to choose with version to roll since "Cissy Strut" has been covered probably a dozen different ways but I like Piazza's simple, acoustic approach plus that nice little drum break in the middle. It's almost lo-fi and I dug on that sound. Big up to J-Toro for putting me up on this.

Next up is "**Soulful Strut**" as done by Sweden's **Spotniks**. I have to give credit to Egon for this one. I first heard this cover of Young Holt Unlimited's biggest hit at his Funky Sole night down in L.A. and I knew I had to find it. Best part to me of this cover them chattering drums.

Staying on the Swedish tip, **The Gimicks** are another set of Nords who tackle Gerald Wilson's well-known composition, "**California Soul**." This isn't as fiery as Marlena Shaw's better known version but I laid its cool, laid-back qualities. Cool Chris put me up on this LP and how can you not like a Swedish rock/folk/jazz group recording in Acapulco, doing a cover of a song called "California Soul."

Reggae maestro **Byron Lee and the Dragonaires** bring us "**Express Yourself**," covering Charles Wright and

Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band's classic. I love reggae interpretations of American rhythms into Jamaican riddims it's at once both familiar and different in delightful ways, especially for this song a soul/funk classic in any patois. Another Cool Chris lesson.

I have to credit Egon again for this next cut, **Kenny and the Beach Boys' "The Big Payback,"** which, of course, is taking on James Brown. € played this at a Future Primitive Show and it stuck in my mind instantly. In truth, it's nowhere near as good as the Godfather's original but its curiosity value is hard to deny.

The one and only **Ri Green** takes on the Beatles' "**I Want to Hold Your Hand**," in one of my favorite songs off this album. This was actually Green's first ever single for Hi Records (and later reissued on the "Love Ritual" anthology). Green and Willie Mitchell give this a soul n' funk touch that the Fab 4 would never have predicted. I can't get enough of this cut.

Patty Drew shows that like Otis Redding, she's also "**Hard to Handle**." I came upon this record randomly but when I saw that she had a version of Reddings' soulified banger, I knew it must have been worth a listen at least and I'm glad I did. She rocks like a bad mutha on this one.

Some goes for **Spanky Wilson** on her cover of Cream's "**Sunshine of Your Love**." I spotted this album at Oakland's Groove Yard and when I dropped the needle on this song, it damn near knocked me out. Wilson is just so damn fierce on this and totally transforms the song to make it her own.

The screaming vocals of **Bobby Byrd** rework Stevie Wonder's "**Signed, Sealed, Delivered**" on this rare 45-only track. That Kid Names Miles first played this for me at a Funky Sole night and it was so sizzling, you practically see the crowd melting before it.

Rockers **Merryweather and Carrey** drop the beat barrage to kick off their cover of Smokey Robinson's soul classic "**Shop Around**," in a version you probably wouldn't have heard the Miracles attempt. I think my man DJ Om hepped me to this one and the fact that it's a J5 break too is just a bonus.

Staying on the rock tip, out of all the version of the Isley Bros.' "**It's Your Thing**," I went with **Dennis Coffey's**, off of 45 (and the "Hair and Things" LP too). It's not the most explosive version of the song but Coffey leans down a mean, low groove that he maintains the whole way through nice. Another Om educational.

This next one is one of those "covers you wouldn't expect." It's **Ray Johnson** cutting up an instrumental version of Calvin Arnold's "**Funky Way**." This 45 only cut was brought to my attention through an ancient mixtape that the guys at Jack's Cellar put out to advertise the kind of music you could find at their store. It took me about three years to finally track this down but it was worth it that milkshake-thick bassline is just so killer.

Bernard Purdie launches into an awesome cover of Buddy Miles' "**Them Changes**," off Purdie's "Shaft" LP. I don't understand why Purdie fans don't crow about this song more not only is it an incredibly funky version of an already funky tune but when Purdie hits that 8 bar drum solo in the middle, you'd have to think it ranks up there with his best breaks. Don't sleep.

Free Creek's cover of Allen Toussaint's huge hit, "**Working in a Coal Mine**" is from a curious album I traded from DJ B-Cause. It's like this odd, superstar rock collabo album from the mid-1970s that had different players on each song. I don't even remember who was on this particular track but I liked how it nodded to Toussaint's funky blues roots but gives it its own touch.

The end chord of Free Creek leads directly into the intro chord of what, to me, is the pinnacle of this collection:

The Dutch Rhythm and Steel Show Band's cover of another Buddy Miles song, "**Down by the River**." This is so monster and never gets old to me. Dave Tompkins put me up on this via a radio interview he had recorded feat. DJ Shadow on some European radio show, where they played this song. Just put this in your car system, hit an empty patch of road and crank it to 11.

The next cut is a mini-mix of sorts, tracing the curious history of the Doors' "**Light My Fire**" as done by **Erma Franklin, Jackie Wilson, and Young Holt Unlimited**. From best I can tell, Young Holt covered the song as an instrumental and then Franklin and Wilson both use that backing track for their own vocal versions. As you can hear all three are completely identical musically speaking though I have to give a slight nod to Franklin for being the better vocalist in this pairing over Wilson.

Finding the right cover to include for Bill Withers' "**Ain't No Sunshine**" was another tough one, since there are so many great ones. I decided to go with **Armado Peraza's** because it's just so damn cool it's like a perfect sunset anthem while sipping on a mojito somewhere.

And just to continue on the cool-out vibe, the long version of George Gershwin's musical hit, "**Summertime**," comes courtesy **Walter Bishop, Jr.** one

of his Black Jazz albums. I love the smoky atmosphere Bishop creates on this version (and he actually covers "Summertime" again on a later album, but that time with a more disco feel).

I've always loved but could never find **Cal Tjader's "Morning**" off his strangely obscure "Agua Dulce" LP. It's a cover of a Claire Fischer composition and it's so sublimely mellow, especially with the vocal chorus no wonder everyone from Pete Rock to OC to De La Soul have sampled from this. It's just that good.

Speaking of so nice, it's been used at least twice, I ended an earlier mix-CD ("Joyride") with **Donovan Carless'** cover of William DeVaughn's summer park classic, "**Be Thankful For What You Got**" before but I couldn't help but bring it in again. This reggae version is absolutely perfect and has me thinking about backyard BBQs whenever I hear it. Thanks again to Cool Chris for finding a box of these originals.

I couldn't get out of this mix though without giving it up for the late, great Barry White who produces this version of his own "**Strange Funky Games and Things**," done this time by protégé **Jay Dee**. What a legend, what a loss, but what a great catalog of music. The King is dead, long live the King.

Coming (some what) soon: DEEP COVERS: 2 DEEP