

## D.C. & CO.

### *Ain't That Somethin'*

#### Cold Wind Records, USA

Someone seems not to have informed D.C. & Co.'s Dave Costarella that it's not the early 1970s any more and all those big horn-section rock/Jazz/R&B bands are either long gone (Chase, Ten Wheel Drive, Lighthouse) or doddering (Chicago). Somebody deserves a serious thanks. Because *Ain't That Somethin'* is a breath of seriously fresh air: think Randy Newman in a good mood for once and fronting Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. Think Joe Cocker revving the old engine for one more go-round. Mr. Costarella has one of those seriously raunchy catarrh-laden voices like Rod Stewart early on, and his band can back him to the hilt. Based in Pennsylvania, D.C.& Co., can cop an Al Green lyric and wed it to a Canned Heat gutbucket blues ("Take Me Down Take Me Down", which features some stinging Duane Allman-like slide guitar courtesy of Frank DiNunzio), borrow a funky pre-Elvis jump blues from you-name it ("What a But-But," with a quote any number of construction workers must be serenading unlucky young women with in and around Philly: I will not repeat it here because my daughter reads *JAZZ NOW* and would slug me), and wrap a hot organ line around a swinging ode to the dance floor and another Friday Thank God. And I thought only Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes remembered that magic formula any more.

Before I go on, the careful reader may notice all the names I've dropped.

This was for a very good reason. D.C. and Co. understand one of the more important dicta of music writing, especially R&B. Bad composers borrow. Great ones steal. Elsewhere on this rockin' recording, and I have not written that in a while, "Move It On Down the Line" allows guitarist Big Tone Torres to do his Jerry Lee Lewis yelp, while if you prefer a bit of salsa spice you might try the instrumental "La Samba de Costarella." The Randy Newman connection comes in a bit more strongly with "Betrayed," a piano-driven observation from Costarella about how admitting one has failed brings a sort of peace, but not the right sort. Excellent, and just the right amount of irony.

This band's sense of talent depth is formidable, as can be heard in Doug Hill and Eric Ensminger's horn arrangements. "Heaven Can't," for example, owes something to early Chicago in that it develops the melody as opposed to providing aural pillowfeathers for everybody else to cushion against. No cushioning of any kind on this CD, and this track contains another Costarella verbal gem ("Heaven can't need you more than me!"). Kudos to keys player Mark Huber and his lovely bow-out on "The New Wedding March," to Mr. DiNunzio for a ring-a-ding-ding vocal which graces the Sinatra-esque "Clip My Wings," and again to whoever has not bought these folks a calendar for several decades. Too much fun to pass up.

by Ken Egbert <http://www.jazznow.com/0803/0803NS.html>

