

Album: Various Artists ★★★★★

Cheatin' Soul, TRIKONT

By Andy Gill

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The soul archivist Dave Godin may have passed on, but Trikont's Jonathan Fischer has picked up the baton as regards quality deep-soul anthologies. This excellent latest collection is a sister compilation to his recent Dirty Laundry country-soul set, this time focusing on the classic Southern soul tradition of "cheating" songs. The full range of the ethical spectrum is covered here, from the predatory adulterousness of Ann Peebles's "Feel Like Breaking Up Somebody's Home" through the other-woman misgivings of Doris Duke's "If She's Your Wife, Who Am I?", to Ann Sexton's triumphalist riposte of the betrayed spouse, "I'm His Wife (You're Just a Friend)"; and from the bullish protective instinct of Clarence Carter, defending his territory in "What Was I Supposed to Do?", to the angry desolation of Bobby Blue Bland on the classic "I Wouldn't Treat a Dog (the Way You Treated Me)". The standard is high throughout, with two cuts apiece from headliners like Bland, Joe Tex and OV Wright, and one-off gems from the likes of Sandra Phillips, Janet and The Jays, Ruby Andrews and the former chief Raelet Margie Hendrix, putting her all into "Don't Destroy Me". I'm not sure that there's really any need for Fischer's attempt to impose a wider socio-political context. The essence of cheatin' soul is its intensely personal hurt.