

Liner Notes Investigation: *What are they all about?*

In the wake of her cathartic, GRAMMY-winning breakthrough—2011’s 21—Adele delivers another peerless collection of stately ballads and seismic vocal performances. Written with an impressive team of collaborators—Paul Epworth, Ryan Tedder, Max Martin, Danger Mouse, and Bruno Mars’ Smeezingtons squad among them—after the birth of her son and a pressing vocal cord operation, 25 finds the North London native singing with newfound strength and clarity. From the volcanic chorus of “Hello” to the hilly melodies of “Send My Love (To Your New Lover)” to the stratospheric belting of “Sweetest Devotion,” each song is an expertly arranged, beautifully realized showcase for a once-in-a-generation voice.

—iTunes Editors Notes for 25, by Adele

After some several days of reflecting and pondering and general thought (which is very unusual), I still can’t think of any non-complimentary things to write about myself. And I ain’t gonna write no general information type stuff either, so I guess I’ll just give credit to some good people who, without their help, I could have completed this project a lot faster. More about them later. And anyway, if you like the artist well enough to buy his or her album, you don’t have to be told how groovy it is, or which tunes you should dig, or how great his or her majesty is. I mean the fact that people just won’t let us think for ourselves really bugs me! Now just because I like “Mercy Mercy Me” and the one that says “Save The Children,” shouldn’t influence anyone. And you shouldn’t have to pay any special attention to the lyric on “Flyin’ High In The Friendly Sky” just because I think you ought to. It’s ridiculous.

—Marvin Gaye, for “What’s Going On”

“I’ve never considered myself an orator nor a politician, only a person who is fortunate enough, thanks to all of you, to become an artist given a chance to express the way he feels and hopefully the feelings of many other people. It is to me a fact that Stevie Wonder is that temporary someone of myself even though we have come to know each other very well and realized because of who he is, the many doors that have been opened may have been closed to myself, Stevland Morris. It is important that you do note permanently in your mind that I do not take a second for granted. For I do believe it is that Stevie Wonder is the necessary vehicle on which Stevland Morris must be carried on his mission to spread love mentalism. In every album that I have and shall do, it is not my goal for that to be better than that and the next to succeed the others, but only that I do and give the best I can at the time of my doing and giving and that only happens because of the dis- or satisfaction that made me want to be a better someone.

“Songs in the Key of Life” is only a conglomerate of thoughts in my subconscious that my Maker decided to give me the strength, the love + love - hate = love energy making it

Liner Notes Investigation (Cont.)

possible for me to bring to my conscious an idea.

An idea to me is a formed thought in the subconscious, the unknown and sometimes sought for impossibles, but when believed strong enough, can become a reality. So let it be that I shall live the idea of song and use its words as my sight into the unknown, but believe positive tomorrow and I shall so when in evil darkness smile up at the sun and it shall to me as if I were a pyramid give me the key in which I am to sing, and if it is a key that you too feel, may you join in and sing with me.”

—**Stevie Wonder, for “Songs in the Key of Life”**

In a fifties sense, a number of Hancock’s Blue Note recordings rate as funk. “Blind Man, Blind Man” employs piano and band voicings from gospel music, and a related backbeat (many musicians insist that the heavy beat of rock and roll came from sanctified churches to begin with). Blues feeling is supplied most prominently by guitarist Grant Green, who sounds in this instance like a more buttery and bigger-toned BB King. Note that the drummer is Tony Williams, who at the time was Hancock’s bandmate in the [Miles] Davis Quintet. In the mid-sixties Tony was known as an innovator of free patterns, a master of color and shadings. ‘Tony Williams turned me on to different rhythms,’ Hancock remembers, ‘overlapping this and that. Tony was really into Paul Bley, Gary Peacock ... This was 1963. Ornette—like I never paid that much attention to Ornette when he first came out, but Tony got me interested in Ornette and got me to the point where I could get into it.’ Several years later, Williams left the Miles Davis band and formed his Lifetime, perhaps the first significant group to play jazz/rock from a jazz perspective. The guitarist was John McLaughlin, who had only recently arrived from England, and the organist was Larry Young (Khalid Yasin), a Blue Note artist at the time and later a participant in McLaughlin’s Devotion and on the McLaughlin/Carlos Santana collaboration. “Blind Man” reveals that Williams was already into jazz/rock; his solid drumming helps make it a harbinger of the music of the seventies.”

—**Robert Palmer (a prominent jazz critic for Rolling Stone and the New York Times), for the Blue Note re-issue of Herbie Hancock’s self-titled album**