



George Michael Triumphs With A Deeper Faith

George Michael



BY ALAN LIGHT



He's back. Seven long years after the release of *Patience*, George Michael has returned to the studio and fashioned a critically acclaimed piece of work, that in this critics mind, eclipses anything yet in his career. Put simply, *A Deeper Faith* is a creative and personal tour de force.

When he smashed his Range Rover into a shop front, late one North London summers night, many critics wrote George Michael creative epitaph. He was considered to be a spent force. An artist bereft of direction.

But with the release of *A Deeper Faith*, this artist has robustly answered his critics. And how.

These ten valedictory songs are fashioned from the reflective period George spent after his brief spell in prison. Forced to confront his inner demons, these songs of yearning and hope, come from the pain of having experienced 'rock bottom'. When least expected, this artist has reconnected with his muse.

Collectively, they last just a shade over an hour and every second confirms, as if further confirmation were needed, that

George is now making some of the most deeply soulful music of his stellar career. It's a quantum leap in artistic terms for George, every song layered in truth and honesty.

Simon Cowell naturally deserves a large portion of the credit. When he first turned up at George's London home in the autumn of 2010, they were an unlikely pairing: the poster boy pin up of the 1980's and the star maker behind the conveyor belt of 21st century reality TV talent.

But this odd couple forged a very special relationship. Cowell provided the belief and focus, a creative space in which Michael could dig deep into his song-writers soul.

There is no doubt that the belief Cowell had in the artist, revitalised Michael creatively and commercially in a key point of his career. According to George's partner Kenny Goss, it was the only thing that kept George going after he came out of prison.

On *A Deeper Faith*, you will find sparse, stark, emotional, intimate renditions of songs from George Michael's heart and soul. Delivered by one of the most fabulously evocative voices in the canon.

The title track sets the tone with its tale of redemption and belief. The sparse arrangements and angelic backing vocals, George's voice soaring above it all, resonant and evocative. No one has ever sung a personal song with more raw emotion.

Really, there is no other voice quite like this, and George's voice as well as his writing is arguably even stronger on *The Man Inside*.

This song is a thing of beauty, especially considering the starkness of the production. It sounds like a hymn, but the lyrics show someone very aware of the dark side of life as well as the possibility of renewal.

Its a fabulous song any which way you look at it lyrically. The

gospel hymn feel is most alluring especially when the backing vocals come in.

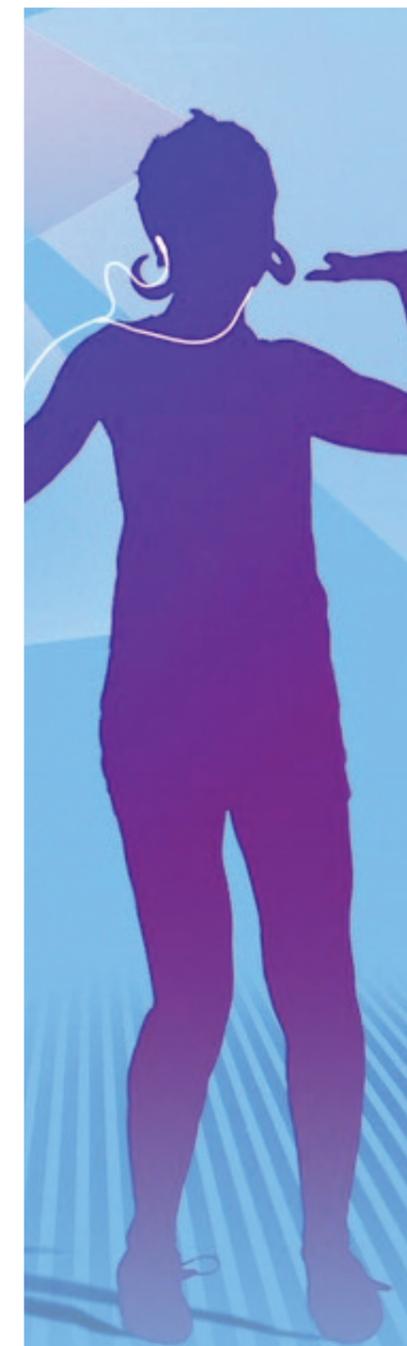
Behind *The Veil* is a sad, beautiful song. It has echoes of Neil Diamonds haunting *Twelve Songs*. Lyrics that ache of loneliness, aiming straight for the heart.

The sparseness is also keenly felt on *No More The Angel* – It comes across more as a song of resignation. It's no less beautiful for it though, and the string arrangements are something else.

'*Passion*' is a life-affirming joy, George sounds content, the song full of energy and vitality. It lacks the spareness of other songs, but the performance is as good as anything else here.

'*Only A Matter Of Time*' is almost impossible to describe. George sounds wise, absorbed in his search for truth. The strings are beautiful, the vocal reaching into your heart and pleading, and the lyrics are some of the best he has ever written.

'*A Deeper Faith*' is something to be unravelled, to tug at your heart and invite you to discover your soul. George has tapped into a well of lyrical and musical truths that is rare in these times. Spiritual and vulnerable, this is the album George Michael has deserved for decades.



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