THE BEST OF

HOWARD "SLIM" HUNT & THE SUPREME ANGELS

Howard "Slim" Hunt & The Supreme Angels

Howard "Slim" Hunt & The Supreme Angels of North Carolina are one of the most formidable church-wrecking outfits on the road today. They can be sweet and angelic in their singing one moment and "rough" (a gospel trouper's word for pew-burning toughness) the next. Their fine recordings are extensive, their tour schedule nationwide. Despite this, the group remains humble and always ready with a kind word for their many fans.

The Supreme Angels were based in Milwaukee in 1960 when lead tenor Howard "Slim" Hunt found, adopted, and took the group back with him to North Carolina. The Supreme Angels' initial recordings were cut for Nashboro during the spring of 1958. "He'll understand" is a fiery scorcher with its calls, taunts, howls, screams, and soulful admonitions, all of which would likely put the sisters in a faint. In the past, during gospel's golden age, the fifteen year period just after World War II, church attendants rescued fallen sisters, carried them up the aisles through the open doors of the church to the waiting curbside ambulance personnel who restored the heaven-sent victims.

A funky boogaloo beat punctuates "Tomorrow may be too late," a call and response shouter that jams along with a cast that includes a Memphis-type brass section. "God will take care of you" is a straight forward reading of Civilla D. Martin's hymn first made widely popular in quartet singing by The Harmonizing Four in 1960. Peerless harmony is demonstrated by The Supreme Angels on "I'm on a mission for the King," one of the group's finest recordings which could well serve as the group's theme song in live concert.

Similar traditional values are laid out on the group's soulful rendition of Rev. Charles A. Tindley's "By and by" ***[sic.]*** during which "Slim" works the live audience into an excited frenzy. More outrageous screaming crowd baiting and downright sermonizing are exhibited on The Supreme Angels' version of "There's no room at the cross." The tension builds and is exaggerated as the song is given more vigor. Another knock-down drawn-out delivery is given "What are they doing in heaven." "Slim"'s touching

pipes and the group's smooth harmonies make this a winner.

Fanny J. Crosby's "Pass me not" is given The Brooklyn All Stars treatment and is sung with the utmost labor and urgency. On the other hand, Thomas A. Dorsey's "Precious Lord, Parts 1 and 2" are given the thunderous high drama approach with their tonsil-busting lead and B.B. King-type guitar figures. "There goes my everything" is given a close harmony country arrangement over which "Slim" tells the sad story of his mama's demise. "Blessed Quietness," a welcome surprise, is given the fifties workout with its simple harmonic structure and strong, impassioned lead. "Slim" puts his "thing" on "Don't leave me, Lord," nice, steadfast harmonies, stabbing organ, and stinging guitar.

One of The Supreme Angels' greatest triumphs is their superb singing of Kenneth Morris's "Yes God is real." "Slim"'s touching pleas and high tenor glissandos are a perfect match for the group's exquisite harmonies. "When Jesus comes," a tune made famous by O.V. Wright and The Sunset Travelers, rounds out this collection with its impassioned lead and silky, unobtrusive harmonies.

Today's touring Supreme Angels are fortunate in having one of the great hard-singing tenor leads of the sixties with them as a non-singing guitar accompanist. His name is "Little Sugar" Hightower, former lead of the legendary Hightower Brothers, yet another outstanding quartet from the Nashboro gospel stable who will be featured with their own collection later on in another series on this label.

— Opal Louis Nations,
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