



Pure Pleasure SD 18026

Ruth Brown: Miss Rhythm

Format: 1LP 180g 33rpm / standard sleeve Release date: 15.06.2018

Manufacturer: Pure Pleasure Original label: Atlantic Genre: Pop

Once fired from Lucky Millinder's band, it was the great Duke Ellington who recommended Ruth Brown to Herb Abramson and his fledgling Atlantic Records in 1949. Good thing, too, because it was Ruth Brown who put Atlantic on the map, make no mistake. She did that with 24 R&B hit singles from 1949 to 1960, five of which crossed over to the Billboard Pop charts. Ruth Brown's second LP is a minor masterpiece, built around a handful of hit singles and B-sides from the prior year ("Book of Lies", "Just Too Much", "When I Get You Baby", "This Little Girl's Gone Rockin'", "Why Me") and containing a pair of current single sides, "Jack O' Diamonds" and "I Can't Hear a Word You Say". Brown is amazing in her range, from the upbeat, romantic "I Hope We Meet (On the Road Someday)" to the jaunty shouter "Why Me" -- her timbre ranges from sweetly romantic to hard and raspy, and listening to the transformations, between the smooth, quick tempo "Just Too Much" to the hard, lusty "Somebody Touched Me", one thinks of a distaff Sam Cooke. Brown's accompaniments may have lacked the polish of Cooke's sides, and she wasn't really shooting for pop-crossover success (though she saw some). Her singing even overcomes excessively pop-oriented arrangements on "When I Get You Baby". At various times, in her upper register, Brown recalls Clyde McPhatter's falsetto singing, while in her middle and lower registers, as on "I Can't Hear a Word You Say", she comes up with a power that could melt a microphone stand. Bruce Eder/AMG

"Miss Rhythm" - Ruth Brown (voc) & var. bands