

The Signal – A Doo Wop Rhapsody

(Alternate title: “Play It Cool”)

Audio Version/Liner Notes by Henry Farag

Five decades, seven artists, a hundred musicians and one true story. Gary, Indiana...the story of a crystal radio wave as it permeates a boy’s chaotic street life.

The audio version is not a cast album though a majority of the troupe is featured in the piece.

The recording is made to fit the audio/radio/podcast format.

From stage to streaming. A musical for your earbuds, yet a true representation of what happens on stage.

A highlight is Vivian Carter. The first Black woman to own a successful record label, the legendary Vee Jay Records. She brought many pioneering R&B and Pop artists to the fore – including Gladys Knight & the Pips, the Four Seasons, and the Beatles.

The production features a true narrative plus artists such as James “Pookie” Hudson & the Spaniels, Jerry Butler, Willie Rogers of the Soul Stirrers, Chris “Righteous” Johnson, and Stormy Weather, and a very special acapella cameo by the Temptations’ original lead singers, David Ruffin, Eddie Kendrick and Dennis Edwards.

Among the renowned Chicago area studio musicians are: Phil Upchurch, Gene “Daddy G” Barge, Willie Henderson, “Tom Tom” Washington, Cash McCall, Morris Jennings, Matt Rose, Al Burroughs et al.

In addition, other stellar musicians are Gary, Indiana’s Kinsey Report featuring Donald Kinsey, the former front man for Bob Marley; Chicago’s Umphrey’s McGee, New Orleans’ Dr. John (John Rebennack), Sump Pump, Tony McCullough.

In all, over 100 artists, musicians, producers and engineers are represented in this 23 song theatrical presentation spanning over five decades. Mostly, steeped in the coal-fired harmony of Gary, South Chicago, Bronzeville, and Record Row, at studios such as Ter-Mar, Chess, Universal, Streeterville, Pumpkin and Blue Star.

The narration by Henry Farag (as himself) and Josie Rogers (as Vivian Carter) navigates a street level view of the Steeltown’s culture, race, family, and immigrants woven through the beginnings of Rock ‘n Roll. Equally represented is R&B, Gospel, Doo Wop, and Northern Soul.

This project was engineered by John Carpenter of Thunderclap Studios in Hammond, IN.

Produced, written, directed, and curated by Henry Farag.

The audio recording is an interpretation of the live stage musical and the book of the same name.

Total running time: 74:36 minutes.

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