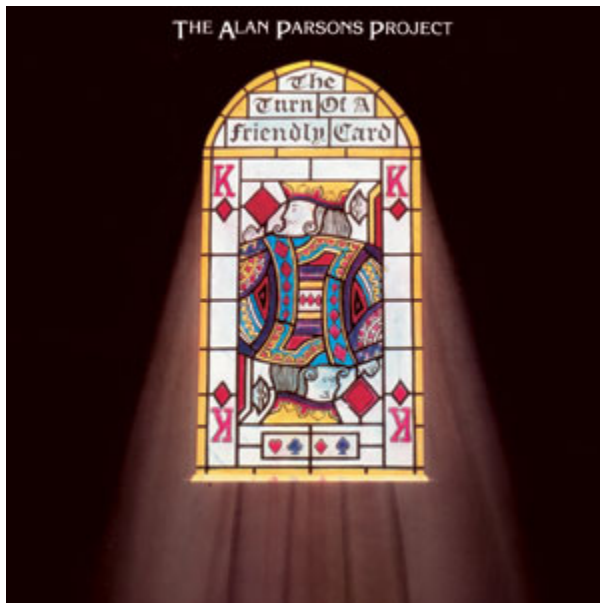


**Alan Parsons Project, *The Turn of a Friendly Card*
Classic Records AR 8226-200G
33rpm 200 gram Single Vinyl LP**



A concept album, recorded in 1979 and released in 1980, *The Turn of a Friendly Card* was one in a series of successful releases by The Alan Parsons Project, including *I Robot*, and would be followed by *Eye in the Sky*. This particular album concerns itself with the experiences of a losing gambler (are there any other kinds?). These albums were part of the soundtrack of my high school and university years, which makes pure objectivity difficult.

I'll assume that most of the folks who are interested in this may well be baby boomers themselves, so won't spend much time discussing the music itself...other than noting that in an era of concept albums (*Tubular Bells*, *Thick as a Brick* and so on), The Alan Parsons Project issues often stood out as models of technical excellence. Just listening to the lush layering of instruments in "Time" and the careful use (but not overuse) of synthesizers reminds us of the importance of production and engineering.

Classic is justifiably proud of this recording. They note that every previous analog and digital issue of this album was based on, at best, second generation master tapes. Not this LP: According to the label the songs were "transferred for the first time from the original flat analog masters supplied by Mr. Parsons who both produced and engineered this sensational title. The improvements in terms of low level detail and clarity were dramatic enough to persuade us to reissue this title on LP...previous editions of this title on all formats have been transferred from production masters - we are a generation earlier here with the tape Alan mixed to 26 years ago."

If this is true, and I have no reason to doubt it, then we are hearing something here that hasn't been heard publicly before. I don't remember much about sound quality when I was listening to this LP in a dorm room 30 years ago, but I'm pretty confident that it didn't sound like this: This LP, from the first track, makes you sit up and pay attention. It sounds *fabulous*. Care in production, engineering, mastering (Bernie Grundman, using

Classic's all-tube system) have really paid off. This is a reference LP that you can use to show off your high-end system.

The original art on the non-gatefold jacket is reproduced nicely. In common with other Classic Records reissues, the outersleeve is encased in Mylar, and the vinyl in a plastic-lined paper innersleeve. My review copy was flat, shiny and perfectly quiet, with no clicks, pops or other annoying artifacts.

Whether you were an Alan Parsons Project fan back in the day, or simply have an interest in seventies and eighties progressive rock, you owe it to yourself to pick up a copy of *The Turn of a Friendly Card*. Then invite some friends over and impress the hell out of them.

Reference Equipment:

- Anthony Gallo Acoustics Reference 3.1 speakers
- McIntosh C712 preamplifier
- Yamaha MX-D1 stereo power amplifier and Anthony Gallo Acoustics Reference 3 subwoofer amplifier
- Sony XDR-F1HD tuner
- VPI Classic Turntable with JMW-10.5i Special Edition Tonearm
- Benz Micro Glider SL Cartridge
- Musical Surroundings NovaPhonomena Phono Preamplifier
- Shanling SCD-T200 SACD player
- Apple iPod Classic, 160 gb
- Mapleshade speaker wire, Blue Jeans speaker cable and interconnects, Ultimate Cables, AudioQuest, ProSolutions and AR interconnects

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