

NINA SIMONE

"Little Girl Blue"



Foreword & Notes From
Original Vinyl Release

NINA SIMONE

Little Girl Blue

A rare commodity in jazz is a new singer who has something different to say and sufficient technique and voice with which to express it. There are plenty of musical singers who vocalize well and have an individual style but who never cross that thin and hard-to-define line that separates a good “pop” style from one that is jazz..

Nina Simone’s first few notes will immediately tell you into which camp she falls. It’s always pleasant to hear a good voice and hers, with its strong individuality, assuredly commands your attention and provides bountiful rewards. Nina’s musical philosophy regarding her singing is to the point – “you got to get to the people.” And with a vibrant and husky contralto that tonally sounds like a blend of an unlikely combination of Marian Anderson and Ma Rainey, she does.

Nina is thoroughly schooled in music and she plays the piano, vocalizes, arranges and composes. Her talents are well represented in this set as she plays all piano parts, does all the singing, has arranged all of the songs and has composed the rhythmic “Central Park Blues.” Her accompaniment, besides her own piano, consists of the sensitive assistance of Jimmy Bond on bass and Al Heath on drums (brother of Percy). Her approach to a performance stems from her philosophy on the subject; she sets the mood with her piano, quite often at extended length, and then she enters in the same mood with her voice. A good example of this is her version of “Little Girl Blue.” Her interpolation of the Christmas carol, “Good King Wenceslas” as a counter-melody has aroused admiration wherever she has played it.

Nina Simone was born February 21, 1933, in the town of Tryon, North Carolina, one of eight children (four boys, four girls) who all sing or play an instrument. Perhaps this stems from the fact that her parents are also quite musical. At four she started to play the piano, by four and a half she was singing. Soon the local church rang with the voices of a trio of the Simone girls (including Nina). In this period she especially liked and was much impressed by Marian Anderson, the great contralto. By the time she reached high school she

was playing jazz piano heavily tinged with the folk blues of the south. When she graduated at 17, she left home for Philadelphia, PA. Here she continued her piano studies and made a living by teaching piano and accompanying vocal students of the popular idiom. She enrolled in at New York’s Julliard School of music for two years of serious piano studies. After four years of accompanying others, she had the yen to sing and give vent to her long subdued vocal talents. Soon she made her first vocal appearance, singing from the keyboard, at the Mid-Town Club in Atlantic City. By this time she heard and enjoyed (and perhaps was influenced by) such stylists as Louis Armstrong, Kitty White, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Jordan and Billie Holliday.

When it comes to instrumental jazz, she likes the modern sounds of groups like Chico Hamilton. In her own words – “I guess I like the progressive sounds ‘cause my training was classical.”

To sum up Nina Simone’s style is difficult, but a listing of what makes her unique is perhaps easier. Her unusual combination of classical training, the ecstatic and serious quality of church music which has influenced her vocal delivery and the “funky” and modern sounds of jazz with which she has come into close contact all make for a novel and often inspiring jazz singer and instrumentalist.

– JOSEPH P. MURANYI

NINA SIMONE PERSONNEL

AL HEATH - Drums

JIMMY BOND - Bass

NINA SIMONE - Piano, Vocals

Recorded 1958

HI-FI

"LITTLE GIRL BLUE"



1. MOOD INDIGO (Mills) Ascaph
2. DON'T SMOKE IN BED (Oriole) Ascaph
3. HE NEEDS ME (Mark VII) Ascaph
4. LITTLE GIRL BLUE (T. B. Harms) Ascaph
5. LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME (Bregman-Vocco-Conn) Ascaph
6. MY BABY JUST CARES FOR ME (Bregman-Vocco-Conn) Ascaph
7. GOOD BAIT (Bregman-Vocco-Conn) Ascaph
8. PLAIN GOLD RING (Pure) BMI
9. YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE (T. B. Harms) Ascaph
10. I LOVES YOU PORGY (Gershwin) Ascaph
11. CENTRAL PARK BLUES (Win-Gus) BMI

..... THANKS FOR LISTENING!

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