



SANTANA
Caravanserai
Speakers Corner/Columbia

Santana are the most well known exponent of Latin-oriented rock music. Anyone who has seen the wonderful coverage from the Woodstock festival in 1969 cannot fail to be impressed by the group's energy and skill, and this particular release is one of Santana's early classics. Released in 1972, this album blends the group's trademark Latin rhythms along with rock and even elements of jazz to keep the listener always on their toes. You never really know what to expect with this release and that's part of the joy of the project which is always looking for ways and means to push and break musical boundaries. As such, you may listen to it and be distinctly underwhelmed. However, don't be deceived - this is a classic 'grower'...

The album is a typical Speakers Corner production in that it appears to be a duplicate of the original. There are no clues that this is a product of 2008; no bar codes, no Speakers Corner logos or copyright notices, no credits pertaining to the reissue. As the original was in 1972 - so is the reissue in 2008. As such, the package is a little treasure. The album has been mastered by the German-based Pallas to their usual high standards. The 180gm vinyl runs quiet which allows the music to breathe. Also, the mastering, from original master tapes,

has produced a wonderful separation of the many instruments that appear on each track. This is a great test record for any new hi-fi component, to see if it can successfully identify the guitar, bass, drums, organ, piano, congas, bongos, timbales and other associated percussion. The mastering gives you every opportunity however, separating each successfully, making each track somewhat of an adventure. Highly recommended.

OTIS REDDING
The Dock Of The Bay
Sundazed/Volt

This is both a joyous and tragic album. Redding was one of the most influential and powerful ambassadors of soul during the sixties. His performances were always played 'to the max'. Like his contemporary, James Brown, Redding physically sweated over his performance, unravelling his emotions in front of the audience, dragging them into the song with him. His big and bold arrangements only enhanced the almost theatrical production he gave to soul and the trademark Stax sound - within which he was so reliable. Mainly because his performances were always consistently good.

That's why this album is joyous. The tragedy revolves around the fact that the album was his last. Redding was to die at the criminally early age of twenty six just when he was about to break into the charts with the title