

## NINA SIMONE - 'NINA SIMONE AND PIANO!'

(SPEAKERS CORNER/ RCA LSP-4102)

Far too many people believe that Nina Simone's claim to fame is a song called *My Baby Just Cares For Me*.

Simone's rise from the obscurity of nightclub gigs came in the late 1950s, when her rendition of the George Gershwin classic, *I Loves You Porgy* became a top 20 hit in the US. But it wasn't to be the start of a career plying the hit parades: Simone was already plying the adult contemporary market with a succession of LPs.

By the mid-1960s, she'd recorded nine LPs for the Candix label, but none were straightforward jazz releases: the Simone sound was much more non-conformist, drawing not only from the jazz, swing and blues repertoire, but also incorporating folk music and other obscure influences.

Later, her work would even embrace some pop and soul influences – nuances that few other singers could have pulled off as convincingly. And even if she was

earning a reputation for being eccentric and even difficult, Simone's performances were always riveting.

'And Piano!' isn't the easiest album to listen to, and especially not when you're not familiar with Simone and her spirited vocal approach.

The music varies from the plain to the plaintive, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from mainstream to bordering on avant garde. But it is thrilling and engrossing stuff, underscoring a talent that perhaps the world never fully understood or gave credit to.

Original artwork, sleeve notes and a crisp, clear production that sounds as if it was recorded in RCA Victor's recording hall only yesterday adds a final, genuine touch. Well worth persevering!

**Performance: 8**

**Recording: 7**

**Pressing: 9**

**Artwork/cover: 8**

**Price: R250**

**Supplied by: Audio Nut.**

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