Nina Simone

And Piano!

Speakers Corner/RCA LSP-4102 180g

Few would argue that Nina Simone divides opinions; defies categorization. As surely as she isn't jazz, she really doesn't sit comfortably in any other generic pigeonhole either. Various producers have dressed her up in different musical clothes but none has managed to disguise or obscure the uniquely off-kilter musical heart that beats within. Trained as a classical pianist, it is Simone's singing for which she is most renowned. Yet her playing informs her vocals and underpins their wilder excesses. *And Piano!* Is a Nina Simone solo-album; just her and piano (and an occasional overdub). This is as close to her musical essence as you are likely to get.

Recorded in 1969, with Simone at her most confident and popular, the sound is big and direct and straightforward. With no arrangements to clutter events, the full expressive range of her soulful, blues voice is all the more apparent, the security of her rhythmic wanderings rooted in the structure and easy formality of her playing. The relaxed ease with which she shifts from one song to the next, treating each in a different (and often surprising) way, is never more apparent than on familiar material like a meltingly beautiful 'I Get Along Without You Very Well...' From spiritual to blues to jazz standard, she brings her own special touch. Whether you are a committed advocate or simply wondering "Why?" this is an album that will provide new answers.

RG

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