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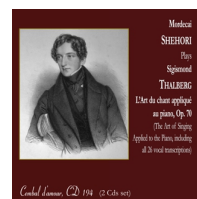


Carly Simon – No Secrets – Speakers Corner Records

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by Audiophile Audition | Mar 9, 2020 | Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews, SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews | 0 comments

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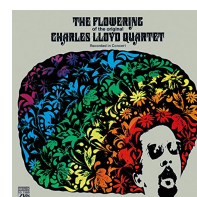


Carly Simon – No Secrets – Elektra Records 75049 (1972)/Speakers Corner Records (2020) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 35:58 ****1/2:



Singer/songwriter Carly Simon was a staple of the 70's music scene, and maintained a successful career. Her sultry *contralto* was an effective vehicle for her introspective brand of pop. After being signed

Pure Pleasure / Speakers Corner



Cedille



to Elektra in 1970, Simon released her self-titled debut in 1971. She received her first *Grammy* (Best New Artist), and had a commercial breakthrough with the single, "That's The Way I Always Heard It Should Be". The following album, *Anticipation* produced another hit with the title song (that was alleged to have been written in 15 minutes). Another plateau was reached with the release of the single, "You're So Vain". It rose to #1 on the *Adult Contemporary* charts and the album (*No Secrets*) spent 5 weeks at the top of the U.S. charts. Carly Simon's career would span decades producing an additional *Grammy* and *Oscar* for the song "Let The River Flow". She has released a trio of standards albums, has written several Children's books and two memoirs.

Speakers Corner Records has released a re-mastered 180-gram vinyl of *No Secrets*. This is the epitome of early 70's popular music, notable for its fastidious production (Richard Perry/Trident Studios) and engineering (Robin Cable). With a stellar cadre of studio musicians, the album envelops the storytelling of Simon's lyrical content with lavish sophistication. Side One opens with an affirmative love song, "The Right Thing To Do". The rhythmic pop flow is complemented by the resonating vocals. Her phrasing is unusually precise and the string/horn accompaniment expands the musical tapestry. It is a well-crafted song with a memorable coda. "Carter Family" is a straightforward childhood reflection (with a catchy 3/4 time signature) displaying philosophical retrospection. A certain highlight of *No Secrets* is the wry "You're So Vain". With a bouncy groove, Carly appears to call out male-counterpart celebrities. As she intones, "...You had one eye on the mirror as you watched yourself gavotte..." the listener is engaged. Of course, the chorus refrain, "...You're so vain, you probably think this song is about you! Don't you, don't you?..." is apropos to the context and features great backup vocals (including some harmony) by an uncredited (at the time) Mick Jagger. It is not surprising that the single hit the top of the charts. In a simpler arrangement, "His Friends Are More Than Fond Of Robin" revisits nostalgia of youth through with mature perspective. The title track exudes an atmospheric open sound, countered by a funky bass, tempo breaks with shades of country eloquence. The clever lyrics explore the difference in sharing everything initially to measured reservations ("...Often I wish I never knew some of those secrets of yours...").

Side Two continues Simon's narratives. "Embrace Me, You Child" is another meditation on childhood, and especially her father. Her earnest vocals and the graceful elegance of Paul Buckmaster's arrangement bring prominence. Small touches like synth accents add atmospheric nuance. Switching gears, "Waited So Long" is a rocker with an unabashed declaration of emerging sexuality ("...Daddy, I'm no virgin, but I've already waited so long..."). This is a quintessential 70's



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studio lineup with Nicky Hopkins (piano) leading an all-star band (including Lowell George on slide guitar, Billy Payne on organ) and the inimitable James Taylor singing backup. There is a nimble tempo break on the chorus. Easing down, "It Was So Easy" is country-infused self-examination with twangy electric guitar (Jimmy Ryan). Simon's vocal agility shines through in tracked recording. In a gritty cover of James Taylor's "Night Owl", Carly flexes her rock credentials with a spirited performance. This is big-time L.A. Rock, with legendary singers like Bonnie Bramlett and Doris Troy (with help from Paul and Linda McCartney) distilling the essence of this genre. Again, Nicky Hopkins' muscular piano drives the jam and the addition of Bobby Keys on tenor saxophone elevates this number. The finale, "When You Close Your Eyes" is a lovely ballad that captures the ethereal troubadour spirit. The stylish production by Buckmaster (with delicate woodwinds) adds glowing texture.

Speakers Corner Records has done a superb job in re-mastering *No Secrets* to 180-gram vinyl. The overall mix is superb (and a good set of stereo headphones will bear this out). Simon's voice is rendered with pristine clarity and rich tone. The orchestrated enhancements are fluent and never overwhelm the centered vocals. It is a vibrant representation of a singer/songwriter at the height of creativity.

Musicians:

Carly Simon – piano, guitar, vocals; Jimmy Ryan – guitar, bass; Bobby Keys – tenor saxophone; Lowell George – slide guitar; Kirby Johnson – electric piano, strings/horn/ARP synthesizer arrangements; Peter Robinson – piano; Bill Payne – organ; Klaus Voorman – bass, guitar; Andy Newmark – drums; Jim Keltner – drums; Nicky Hopkins – piano, Paul Buckmaster – strings/woodwind/synthesizer arrangements; Dave Henshaw – synthesizer; James Taylor – background vocals; Bonnie Bramlett – background vocals; Doris Troy – background vocals; Paul McCartney – background vocals; Linda McCartney – background vocals

TrackList:

Side One:

The Right Thing To Do
The Carter Family
You're So Vain
His Friends Are More Than Fond Of Robin
We Have No Secrets

Side Two:

Embrace Me, You Child
Waited So Long
It Was So Easy



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