

Mose Allison - Mose Allison Sings (1963)

Written by bluesever

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1 *The Seventh Son* 2 *Eyesight To The Blind* 3 *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me* 4 *Lost Mind* 5 *I Got A Right To Cry* 6 *Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand* 7 *Parchman Farm* 8 *If You Live* 9 *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* 10 *One Room Country Shack* 11 *I Hadn't Anyone Till You* 12 *Young Man* 13 *That's All Right* Mose Allison - piano, vocals, trumpet Taylor LaFargue (1 to 9, 11, 13), Addison Farmer (10, 12) - bass Frank Isola (10, 12), Nick Stabulas (4, 6, 7, 9, 11), Ronnie Free (1 to 3, 5, 8, 13) - drums

At first glance, Mose Allison Sings might seem to be just another reissued jazz recording from the 1950s. Like most CDs of this ilk, it has been digitally remastered and has additional "bonus" tracks now possible without the space limitations of vinyl records.

A cynic might use the term "old wine in new bottles" to characterize many of these reissues. There are exceptions, of course, and this album is one. The most compelling reason to reexamine an old album stems from the recognition that there may be much we either have forgotten or did not properly appreciate the first time. Mose Allison Sings reminds us how true that can be.

The legendary Rudy Van Gelder engineered the session and mastered the original LP. However, since the advent of CDs, others have made the masters—until he was given the opportunity. "I remember the sessions well," Van Gelder recounts. "I remember how the musicians wanted it to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks." In this light, it's difficult to argue with his assertion that he is now their authentic "messenger." The warm, full sound quality here is everything one would expect from Van Gelder.

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Eminent jazz scholar Ira Gitler adds a few paragraphs to his original liner notes, including the fact that he briefly served as Allison's manager. He points out that Allison started out playing trumpet as well as piano, but stopped when his horn was stolen in Philadelphia. One of the bonus tracks, "Trouble in Mind," displays Allison's trumpet playing, and listeners hearing his soulfully understated horn style for the first time are likely to ask, along with Gitler, why he never replaced it.

While the dry wit of Allison's singing eventually eclipsed his piano skills, he was a bona fide jazz musician who played with Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan and Zoot Sims before achieving fame in his own right. Allison effectively absorbed influences from Sonny Williamson to Nat Cole, says Gitler, describing his piano solos as "unspectacular but effective... models of brevity and wit."

Allison's range, and his seemingly effortless ability to balance it, is evident here. Along with his own composition "Parchman Farm," the other tune for which he is best known is Willie Dixon's "The Seventh Son." Both are good examples of his down-home, Delta blues style. Yet he sounds equally comfortable covering the jazz of Duke Ellington, the rhythm and blues of Ray Charles, and the country and western of Jimmy Rogers.

In the confessional style appropriate to the blues, Gitler admits he hasn't listened to much of Allison's recent work but promises to mend his ways "as soon as the opportunity presents itself." He strongly implies we would do well to follow suit. ---Victor Verney, allaboutjazz.com

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