

Nina Simone – Jazz As Played in an Exclusive Side Street Club (1958)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 21 February 2010 20:43 - Last Updated Friday, 12 May 2017 21:28

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- 01) *Mood Indigo*
 - 02) *Don't Smoke In Bed*
 - 03) *He Needs Me*
 - 04) *Little Girl Blue*
 - 05) *Love Me Or Leave Me*
 - 06) *My Baby Just Cares For Me*
 - 07) *Good Bait*
 - 08) *Plain Gold Ring*
 - 09) *You'll Never Walk Alone*
 - 10) *I Loves You Porgy*
 - 11) *Central Park Blues*
 - 12) *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands*
 - 13) *For All We Know*
 - 14) *African Mailman*
 - 15) *My Baby Just Cares For Me [extended version]*
- Bass – Jimmy Bond Drums – Albert Heath Piano, Vocals – Nina Simone

Nina Simone's first official album, 1958's *Jazz As Played in an Exclusive Side Street Club*, is pure perfection, an amazing accomplishment for a 24-year-old pianist arranging and singing studio renditions of songs from her live set. Captured here are moments of intrigue, as Simone magically takes the listener through musical caverns that want to be explored again with repeated spins. The rendition of "Plain Gold Ring" is exotic and draws the listener back, just as the Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart classic "Little Girl Blue" (the alternate title of the album stamped on the label of the vinyl as well as on the back cover) is a gorgeous work of art, Simone adding the melody from the traditional "Good King Wenceslas" to the standard Janis Joplin would bring to rock audiences a decade later. The cover photograph of the artist on a park bench in Central Park is a play on her only songwriting contribution, "Central Park Blues," which concludes the LP. In her autobiography, Simone gives insight into the recording of this masterpiece, an album that sets different tones with each melodic adventure. The uptempo

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blues of "Mood Indigo" drops quietly into "Don't Smoke in Bed" and the even deeper blues of "He Needs Me." One can hear Billie Holiday's influence pushing Simone on her own musical path. While Roger Williams was tearing up the popular charts with his middle-of-the-road magic, Simone elegantly plays her jazz with adult contemporary leanings, cracking the Top 20 herself with "I Loves You, Porgy" in 1959. Jazz as Played in an Exclusive Side Street Club (aka Little Girl Blue) is a superb fusion of jazz, blues, and pop that reveals something new each time it is played. ---Joe Viglione, AllMusic Review

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