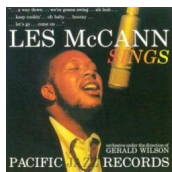


Les McCann - Les McCann Sings (1961)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 16 January 2012 19:21 - Last Updated Monday, 15 January 2018 15:07

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Side 1 - 17:57 1. *Wonder Why (Nicholas Brodsky/Sammy Cahn)* - 2:58 2. *It's Way Past Suppertime (Les McCann/Vicki Arnold)* - 3:06 3. *'Deed I Do (Walter Hirsch/Fred Rose)* - 2:54 4. *Since I Fell For You (Buddy Johnson)* - 3:37 5. *But Not For Me (Ira Gershwin/George Gershwin)* - 2:58 6. *I Cried For You (Gus Arnheim/Abe Lyman/Arthur Freed)* - 2:24
[play](#)

Side 2 - 16:53

7. *Sweet Georgia Brown (Kenneth Casey/Ben Bernie/Macio Pinkard)* - 2:27
[play](#)

8. *Please Send Me Someone To Love (Percy Mayfield)* - 2:32 9. *Next Spring (Marvin Jenkins)* - 3:21 10. *Love Letters (Edward Heyman/Victor Young)* - 3:16 11. *On The Street Where You Live (Alan Jay Lerner/Frederick Loewe)* - 3:10 12. *Bye Bye Black Bird (Ray Henderson/Mort Dixon)* - 2:07

Musicians: Les McCann (piano, vocals) Herbie Lewis (bass) Ron Jefferson (drums). + Orchestra Gerald Wilson (conductor, arranger)

This album, this one right here, exposes a fugitive. It flips the lid off Les McCann the piano player to reveal Les McCann the singer. The hidden man behind the man, the McCann behind the McCann. That in itself will be good news for previous McCann appreciators. (If some basketball players can rebuild 300 SL engines and some plumbers can reset broken bones, why shouldn't some piano players also sing?)

But do not think that McCann's vocal merit lies in the not-so-novel fact that he's also a fine jazz pianist. No. This singer stands on his own two feet. The fact is that he could (if absolutely necessary) sing with his hands tied behind him. Fortunately, strait jackets were ruled out of this recording session (wild though it may have been) and the piano you hear behind, above, below, around and in spite of the voice in these songs is being played by McCann.

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As for variety of moods, you name it, you got it. McCann's a table hopper anyway. He jumps from frisk ("I Cried For You") to funk ("Sweet Georgia Brown"). Then he gets quiet ("Since I Fell For You") or all-out no-doubt down ("It's Way Past Suppertime"). And don't underestimate the steady but subtle ground floor built by Herbie Lewis' bass and Ron Jefferson's drums. Ochestrally they form the bottom but anyone with half an ear (even if it's atrophied, probably even if it's got a plug in it) can tell you that they're also the top.

A word about the frame this flat-fifth painting is set in. It is due to the combined musicality of Les McCann and arranger Gerald Wilson. Gerald has set the arrangements around Les' ideas, adding his own. The result is almost total freedom, almost total agreement. The music says more for the stature of Gerald Wilson the Arranger than these words ever could: he has a singular way of saying the right thing in the right place.

The rest of the notes will not be found on the album cover. Those notes are in the music, which is on the record, which should be on your record player as soon as you can make it.

This album should demonstrate the fact that true talent (feeling, beauty, swing, soul, whatever you like to call it this season) lies in the creator himself--and the release of that talent is not always limited to one vehicle of expression. In other words, never mind how you say it, just get it said. Les McCann gets it said. And he sings so much the way he plays piano that sometimes it's difficult to tell the two apart. --- Vicki Arnold

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