

cash box/

talent on stage

Nina Simone

LINCOLN CENTER, N.Y.C. — Regarded as a high priestess of Soul, Miss Nina Simone, received an enthusiastic reception and was greeted with a standing ovation at her solo concert Saturday evening, July 28.

She came on stage wearing her usual cool sophistication, and immediately took command of the jammed auditorium—never losing the audience's attention for one minute. At times during the concert it was so still one could hear the proverbial pin drop.

Miss Simone accompanied herself on piano; her accomplishment as a concert pianist was evident in many of the numbers. Nina was assisted by two expert musicians: Nadi who played a variety of wooden instruments all of which he made, and Al Shanker a dynamite guitarist and conga player.

Her repertoire encompassed folk, jazz and blues with songs ranging from a light-hearted rendition of Mr. Bojangles to an intense, "Ne Me Quittez Pas." From a Bessie Smith hit, "Put A Lump Of Sugar In My Bowl," that had the audience rocking, to an original Indian chant, "Nina." Al Shanker played the sitar beautifully on this number.

Miss Simone was in rare form, belting out songs for more than two and one half hours. She is truly a unique performer—talented, exciting, humorous, diverse.

This concert will be remembered for a long time. Evidence of its success were the two encores she gave to appease her ardent fans. Her interpretation of Alone Again, Naturally, the first encore, was executed with such feeling that it brought tears to my eyes.

If you missed this concert, you missed one of the most exceptional concerts of the season.

a.k. & d.d.

Atlanta Rhythm Section

ASH GROVE, L.A.—It looks like Al Kooper knew what he was doing when he packed-up and moved to Atlanta to set-up his new record company, Sounds of the South. That is, if the Atlanta Rhythm Section is any indicator. What a group! What a way to let loose, lay back and lap up their music in big, greedy gulps. Yet, they're not terribly visual—they don't zig-zag around the stage; they don't seem overly ecstatic about being there; and they're not even pretty-pretty. But just try and look away.

They bust boogie out here, blues there, a little gospel gnawing occasionally and of course some straight rock now and then. A group of six sure-footed musicians, the band sounds as if it were three times that number throughout their set.

Dividing their show up, about half of it features material from their Decca LP, "Back Up Against the Wall," in which everything on it can be credited to their's truly. "Conversation," a flowing folk statement about dialogue break-downs between people, and "Will I Live On?," an impassioned prayer of sorts done with a restrained r&b feeling, were the top adorners off the album. "Long, Tall Sally" and "The Weight" stormed in with the kind of strength, rhythmically, that explains why the group bears the name it does.

The Atlanta Rhythm Section was formed when it was realized that top session men—which they were and still are—can also be top bands. It's true.

b.m.

Johnny Mathis Henry Mancini

AMPHITHEATRE, UNIVERSAL CITY—Tux'd and with the sky tenting him, Johnny Mathis appeared with the emollients for the evening—euphonius orchestrations, symmetry in the material and, most importantly, the soigne stylishness always such a part of him.

The Columbia Records artist moved easily back and forth across the stage in unhurried steps. No brandisher of obvious contrivance, he is a superb stager who slips in and out of the many emotional lives of each song as though there were nothing to it. His stock in himself, as it were, is totally convertible and retrievable upon command. For instance, the very down "I Was Born in Love with You" was pulled about with a sad, sad stamp to it while the very up "I Got Love" erupted into a solid, first-rate show-stopper.

Two of the nicest touches were when he performed "Killing Me Softly with Her Song," which dueted him on the choruses with his guitarist Gil Rogers and when, after an exceptional coup de grace with "Maria," his voice remained on that final high-note softly echoing well into the applause. The night, of course, featured the expected medley and it was as welcomed as was he.

There were no fizzles or blank cartidges for Henry Mancini, either. The RCA musician has become increasingly comfortable with his audience and was downright cozy with them this night. His genius—there is no other word, period—is so apparent from the first minute he starts the conducting chores (wrong word, but no matter) whether it is in some of the best marches this side of the Rose Bowl or in a flute solo to "Flight of the Bumble Bee." This bee also got a working out on Tommy Johnson's tuba, too. In fact, Mancini spotlighted several of his key band members in solos—Graham Young on trumpet for "Spanish Trumpet," Bobby Bruce on fiddle for "Oklahoma Crude" and Bud Bribois on trumpet for "Peter Gunn," still the top crowd pleaser. And he is not afraid to make room for the precious contributions of the Le Grands ("Windmills of Your Mind," "Summer of '42" and the Rotas ("Romeo and Juliette," "Godfather"). At the piano, and at the near peak of his performance, he spills out their moving melodies as though they were his own. But the composer/arranger's best part came when he went through his own medley of songs, which are so well-known by now, they don't really need to be repeated. What a terrific night.

b.m.

The Wailers

UPSTAIRS AT MAX'S KANSAS CITY, NYC—The Wailers, one of the Caribbean's top reggae groups, aren't well-known—yet. But the Island recording artists attracted a nightly crowd of trend-setters, trend-seekers and American musicians, a sure sign that the infectious reggae sound will be going pop in the months to come. The syncopated guitar riffs which form the base of reggae have proved catchy enough to produce hit singles for Johnny Nash and others. The Wailers are the real thing, though, and it's just a matter of time before their combination of music and lyrics captures the mass market. Their delivery is unique; their message is timely, and it cuts across ethnic lines. The Wailers are kinky and here to stay.

r.n.

Buddah Boosts TV Exposure As Top Promotional Asset

NEW YORK — The Buddah Group is moving into heavy television exposure for its acts in the months of August and September, following major TV activity in the course of the summer.

Stated Ron Weisner, Buddah's vice-president in charge of Artist Relations: "Both Curtis Mayfield and Gladys Knight & The Pips will be hosting The Midnight Special, including appearances by Charlie Daniels and Stories. We have just made arrangements for a special taping of 'In Concert' to take place at Attica State Prison featuring Mayfield and Sha Na Na. In addition, Gladys Knight & The Pips are scheduled for appearances on The Dean Martin Show, The Tonight Show, The Flip Wilson Show and The Mike Douglas

Show." Recently Buddah acts including Sha Na Na, Robert Klein, Barbara Mason, Edwin Hawkins, Rod McKuen, Gunhill Road, Monty Python's Flying Circus and Steve Goodman have taped segments of The Midnight Special, and other shows.

Role Of TV

Weisner continued, "Television has had an increasingly important role for contemporary music. Through television, literally millions of viewers are introduced to an act in a more intimate and more striking way than radio airplay can provide. The results can always be translated into immediate records sales, and unquestionably, TV exposure has a major function in establishing an act, and in building and maintaining its growth."

"When an act signs with Buddah," Weisner added, "There is a total commitment on the part of The Buddah Group to support our artists. In addition to the well-defined efforts of publicity and promotion, artist relations now has an equally significant function to perform." The recent heavy sales of Sha Na Na's album "The Golden Age Of Rock 'N' Roll" can be traced to their very intense schedule of television appearances.

TV News

Along with network television, television news has proved to be a major factor in presenting acts in the personal way that only television can. "A David Frye recording session, in NYC, for his album 'Richard Nixon: A Fantasy' was picked up by all local TV news programs in the New York area," added Weisner. "Similarly, interviews with Curtis Mayfield (in Watts, on the occasion of his appearance at Santa Monica Civic Auditorium and in Harlem, at the time of his concerts at New York's Apollo Theatre) were reported on television. In this way, these two artists have been brought into the living rooms of millions of people, thanks to Buddah's success in engaging the interest of both national and local TV news programs." Additionally, under the direction of Buddah's Artist Relations department, promotional films featuring various Buddah artists are prepared for colleges and local TV programs.

Said Weisner, in conclusion, "There is no longer any question of the enormous importance of television in exposing both new and established talents to the record-buying public."

Cassidy Stays A 'Partridge' In Fourth Season

HOLLYWOOD — David Cassidy will co-star in every episode of Screen Gems' ABC-TV comedy series "The Partridge Family," starring Shirley Jones, during its fourth season, clarifies exec producer Bob Claver. Contrary to industry rumors, Cassidy has one more year to run on his contract with the studio, Claver added.

Rick Seagull, a four-year-old singer recently signed to "The Partridge Family," will be playing a newly-created role in the series and is not intended as a replacement for Cassidy.

Claver also said that there is a search being conducted for a new teen actor to join the show, but he will be an additional character and will not replace Cassidy in the Keith Partridge role.

"The Partridge Family" stars Miss Jones and co-stars Cassidy, Susan Dey, Danny Bonaduce, Brian Foster and Suzanne Crough with Dave Madden.

Medress, Appell End 13 Year Tokens' Ties

NEW YORK — Producers Hank Medress and Dave Appell and The Tokens have ended their association by mutual consent.

The Tokens, now known as Cross Country, have recorded an album for Atlantic, co-produced by Medress and Appell, from which "In The Midnight Hour" has been pulled as a single.

According to the terms of the agreement, Medress and Appell renounce all financial rights or interest in Cross Country for publishing as recording artists or in the names "Cross Country" and "The Tokens." In return, Cross Country has given up all financial rights and interests in the production company co-owned by Medress and Appell who will also receive all rights to Tridem Music.

It was further announced that Medress and Appell will be full partners in their production company, which has produced the Dawn (featuring Tony Orlando) since their first multi-million seller "Candida" to their current chart-topper "Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose." Medress and Appell also produce Melissa Manchester. Both artists appear on Bell Records, a division of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.

Medress was a member of The Tokens since their inception 13 years ago. Their long career included many hits such as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," "Portrait Of My Love," "I Hear Trumpets Blow" and others. They also produced three million sellers by The Happenings: "Mammy," "I Got Rhythm" and "See You In September" and "He's So Fine" by The Chiffons.

Malamud Forms Production Co.

HOLLYWOOD — Eric Malamud, formerly director of A & R for Signpost Records, and prior to that a staff producer at Capitol Records, has formed Mom & Dad Productions, an independent production company. Artists produced by Malamud, and now handled by Mom & Dad, include The Persuasions and Alan Schick, both on MCA Records; Michael A. Chain, on Twentieth Century Records, and Skip Jackson, currently on Capitol Records.

The newest venture for the fledgling company is Dee Ervin, an r & b singer/song writer, who has recently been signed to Mike Thevis' GRC Records. Buz Wilburn handled the negotiations with Malamud for the Atlanta-based label.

Ira Wood, formerly with Signpost Records, has been appointed administrative assistant to Malamud. The company is located at 8401 Hillside Avenue in Hollywood.