

PRESTIGE
HI-FI LP 7079

SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS

SONNY ROLLINS

TOMMY FLANAGAN DOUG WATKINS MAX ROACH



One of the Seven Wonders of the World was the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue of Apollo, 100 feet high, which purportedly straddled the channel leading into the port at Rhodes. Erected about 280 B.C., it was felled by an earthquake in 224 B.C.

Sonny Rollins is unlikely to be toppled by an earthquake; he doesn't live on Rhodes (or in California). His contributions to jazz are of a nature that places them above destruction by earthquakes or any other natural phenomena. To the contrary, Sonny's playing has caused several noticeable movements of the seismograph of jazz in the past few years.

Of the five selections in this LP, three are originals by leader Rollins, one a ballad standard, and the other a tune from a German musical play which became quite popular in the United States during 1956. Each of the five has its own distinctive flavor which makes the listening experience a varied one.

"St. Thomas," named for one of the Virgin Islands, is an ingratiating calypso melody that you will find yourself humming at unexpected moments. Sonny is one of the New York-born jazzmen whose family lineage stems from the West Indies (Arthur Taylor, Mal Waldron, Kenny Drew, Cecil Payne, and Ernie Henry are others) and he has heard this beat and type of melody from childhood. His solo is a delight in the way he phrases against, under, and around the island rhythmic feeling. Max Roach shines in his featured spot, once again demonstrating his musical approach to the drums.

Chicago, the scene of Sonny's study period in 1955, is paid homage to in "Strode Rode"; the Strode Lounge is a local jazz room. The punching minor theme, accented by Max, leads directly into a kinetic solo by Sonny that begins with a passage of pianoless backing. The impeccable Tommy Flanagan is as fluid as ever and fiery in a more overt manner

than usual. Sonny and Max exchange thoughts in a bristling conversation before "Strode Rode" rides out.

Doug Watkins and Max Roach set the solid, medium-down groove for "Blue 7," a minor blues of power with solos by all. Sonny has several statements of meaning separated by the others' solo efforts. Max's fantastic polyrhythms and intelligent construction of ideas make his solo one of his best on record.

"You Don't Know What Love Is" is the ballad standard, one which has not been overdone as yet. Add Sonny's heartfelt version to those of Miles Davis and Dinah Washington as meaningful ones that come immediately to mind.

The German musical mentioned before is *The Threepenny Opera* and the song "Moritat," or as it is popularly known, "The Theme from *The Threepenny Opera*." Sonny shows how a jazzman can make something fresh and different out of material by his very approach and interpretation.

When Louis Armstrong recorded it in a vocal and instrumental version, it quite naturally had a jazz feeling, but it was more directly in the realm of "entertainment." Sonny seems to feel it in a Pres vein as much of his phrasing indicates.

The use of the word *colossus* brings to mind its adjectival derivative *colossal*, a word which has had its share of buffeting about among Hollywood's celluloid hucksters in their press releases regarding many of the empty epics which pass across the screens of the nation. The dictionary says *colossal* is gigantic; huge; vast. When applied to Sonny Rollins's talent, it also signifies depth.

—IRA GITLER

These notes appeared on the original album liner.

1. ST. THOMAS 6:46

(Sonny Rollins) Prestige Music-BMI

2. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS 6:28

(Raye-DePaul) MCA Music-ASCAP

3. STRODE RODE 5:13

(Rollins) Prestige-BMI

4. MORITAT 10:02

(Weill-Brecht) WB Music-ASCAP

5. BLUE 7 11:16

(Rollins) Prestige-BMI

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CAPJ 7079 SA



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SONNY ROLLINS—*tenor saxophone*

TOMMY FLANAGAN—*piano*

DOUG WATKINS—*bass*

MAX ROACH—*drums*

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK

Recorded in Hackensack, NJ; June 22, 1956.

Recording engineer—Rudy Van Gelder

Cover design/photo—Hannan



This music was recorded using only vacuum-tube components. As this is the primary reason the sound is so lush and natural, Doug Sax mastered this recording from the original analog tapes using the Mastering Lab's proprietary all-tube electronics until the final digital conversion.

Sax used the latest third-generation Analog-to-DSD converters by Ed Meitner/EMM Labs to transfer the music to the SACD layer. The CD layer was transferred directly to the Sony PCM 1630 system through a modified George Massenburg A/D converter. We feel that this approach demonstrates the finest merits of each format.

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