



SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS
SONNY ROLLINS

TOMMY FLANAGAN DOUG WATKINS MAX ROACH



Mastered in DSD256

For once, an album title that doesn't misrepresent the artist. Rollins has been making music of the very highest calibre for well over half a century, but this session could just well be his greatest achievement. And like so many classic albums of the period, it was taped in a single session, in the summer of 1956. The playing of all four musicians concerned: Rollins, Tommy Flanagan, Watkins and Roach is of the highest order to where the passing of 54-years hasn't in any way diminished its sheer vitality. Truth: it sounds even more contemporary today than way back then with recordist Rudy Van Gelder faithfully capturing the sheer depth of Rollins' delivery. Though 'Saint Thomas' and 'Moritat' ('Mack The Knife') are this album's best known tracks a knowing interpretation of 'You Don't Know What Love Is' is surely the jewel in this crown. As a bonus the Work Time album, recorded six months earlier has the leader and Roach bookending Ray Bryant and George Morrow and, as they say, adds extra value.

Saxophone Colossus is the sixth studio album by American jazz saxophonist Sonny Rollins. Perhaps Rollins's best-known album is often considered his breakthrough record. It was recorded monophonically on June 22, 1956, with producer Bob Weinstock and engineer Rudy Van Gelder at the latter's studio in Hackensack, New Jersey. Rollins led a quartet on the album that included pianist

Tommy Flanagan, bassist Doug Watkins, and drummer Max Roach. Saxophone Colossus was released by Prestige Records to critical success and helped establish Rollins as a prominent jazz artist.

In 2017, Saxophone Colossus was selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or artistically significant."

There are five tracks on the album, three of which are credited to Rollins. "St. Thomas" is a calypso-inspired piece named after Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands. The tune is traditional and had already been recorded by Randy Weston in 1955 under the title "Fire Down There."

The final track, "Blue 7", is a blues piece, over eleven minutes long. Its central, rather disjunct melody was spontaneously composed. The performance is among Rollins's most acclaimed and is the subject of an article by Gunther Schuller entitled "Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation." Schuller praises Rollins on "Blue 7" for the use of motivic development, exploring and developing melodic themes throughout his three solos so that the piece is unified rather than being composed of unrelated ideas.

Sonny Rollins Saxophone Colossus

- 1 St. Thomas 6:42
- 2 You Don't Know What Love Is 6:24
- 3 Strobe Rode 5:11
- 4 Moritat 9:57
- 5 Blue 7 11:12

Recorded by Prestige at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; June 22, 1956
Engineer - Rudy Van Gelder Supervised By - Bob Weinstock



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