

# Aretha Wailer, Wooper, Winner

NEW YORK—When Aretha Franklin, eyes closed, soars into "Dr. Feelgood," crowds shiver, gold records flash by like day-dreams and a moody Detroit girl has kept her own promise of winning. On Sunday (13) Miss Franklin enjoyed her finest hour, sharing with her family and fans at Philharmonic Hall her winnings and how she won them—by wooing them with her kinetic soul music, available on Atlantic Records.

Whether digging into the piano or preaching at center stage, Miss Franklin can rebound from despair, climbing out of "Ain't No Way" into a delirious "Respect," confessing to being a link in the "Chain of

Fools," then persevering for peace in "We Shall Overcome." Her big voice, primed for frequent sprints through the octaves, gave way to a smaller, breathy ballad voice which, after wringing out the blues, would linger like a music box running down in an empty room.

Supported by the Sweet Inspirations, Miss Franklin shared the evening's laurels with Cissy Houston, the group's lead, who buoyed "Ain't No Way" and "Say a Little Prayer" with her sparkling counter harmony and bursts of gospel grandeur. On their own, the Sweet Inspirations sang "Sweet Inspiration," their first disk for Atlantic, "Unchained Melody," their latest, and "Alfie." But Miss Houston's soaring soprano stunned the audience to gasps of disbelief and wild applause. The revelation of the Inspirations to New Yorkers and "downtown" audiences should catapult this back-up group to the front of the class acts, and Miss Houston to the heights of recognition now enjoyed only by Aretha Franklin.

The Drifters, another Atlantic group, rounded out the show with a medley of their oldies, but the evening belonged to soul queen Aretha Franklin by popular acclamation and to Cissy Houston on the strength of her future—and to 4,900 soul fans who put them there and made them winners. **ED OCHS**

## Four Tops Spin Soul With a Smooth Beat

NEW YORK — Motown's Four Tops, with their popular soul sound, stirred up an opening night gathering at the Copacabana Thursday (21) like guest speakers at a revival meeting. Staked to a thumping beat, the Tops spun through their slick act with military precision, spacing their disk successes with versions of "Still of the Night," "Impossible Dream," "Mack the Knife" and a medley of 1967's top movie themes.

Song after song, their machine gun delivery kept the audience in constant motion, clapping, stamping, exercising and

mouthng to the music. "Baby, I Need Your Lovin'" rambled on through several choruses, repeated again and again like a half-learned lesson by the crowd. The Tops' hits, including "Same Old Song," "Reach Out" and "I Can't Help Myself," were given the same soul treatment as "Look of Love" and "Turn to Stone."

The group, well-schooled in Motown dance drills matched flawlessly to the songs, dropped the flashy routines and finished with "The Christmas Song," a musical toast to the holidays.

**ED OCHS**