

Joe Simon Hangin' On To Success for Keeps

LOS ANGELES—Joe Simon, billed as heir to the fans of the late Otis Redding and Sam Cooke, is as cautious about his new success as a prizefighter approaching the center of the ring. His single, "You Keep Me Hangin' On," a country tune reworked with soul, has thrust the Sound Stage 7 artist on the brink of better things. But for Simon, he feels he may be exposing himself to the knockout punch of too much success too fast.

"I don't want to rush my career," said Simon. "I'll take my time, because the artist who rushes overlooks a lot of things." But the pressure of placing on national charts, of being eyed for nightclub dates and tours, has partially flushed Simon from behind his defense. Simon will be the featured singer on "The Story of Soul," a European tour with soul and jazz stars including Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie and Muddy Waters. The tour, set for October, pleases Simon, who wants to spread his influence into the music of Arthur Prysock, the late Nat Cole and other artists who built their longevity, not on r&b, but on the performance of "good" music.

But despite Simon's goal, it was "You Keep Me Hangin' On," a butter-smooth r&b ballad, that made Joe Simon, the singer. Rhythm and blues is the musical style that Simon is accustomed to after ten years of working in small r&b clubs taking home \$10 to \$15 a night. "You've had to suffer hardships," asserts Simon, in order to be a meaningful performer with your own style." And though his price has gone up,

Simon adds, "I don't want to overprice myself; the fastest way to work yourself out of this business is to charge too much."

Simon's disdain for speedy success comes from an appreciation of his past. Artists who become overnight successes haven't suffered, Simon believes, adding that it is better to have your music bought and sold for its "soul" quality, rather than its overnight impression. "But you've got to leave room for somebody else to make money," he said. "If a guy can't make any money, he won't be messing with you."

Currently on a tour of one-ners in the Southwest, Simon is moving closer to his goal every day, as his single and album, "No Sad Songs," climb up the charts. "The key in this business is a good record and playing college dates. College audiences represent tomorrow. In order to be successful, you have to be around tomorrow."

CLUB REVIEW

Gladys Knight & the Pips Put on a Pip of a Show

NEW YORK — Gladys Knight & the Pips, another of Motown's crack soul squads, proved once again in their Copacabana debut Thursday (11) that, in the Motor City, the motor is soul - powered and gassed up with Motown premium. Bongos and blues flavored with that old-time tight rock harmony struck the right chord for perky Gladys Knight and her three Pips.

A shade shorter than Martha Reeves and a hair-do higher than Diana Ross, Gladys Knight switched from r&b to clean pop vocals as easily as she changed gowns mid-show from red to green. Whether whipping the beat in "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," their biggest hit, or cooing the blues in "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," she proved fluent in either language. Singing support for Miss Knight came from the Pips, whose driving sound was tempered with straight-forward harmony and answering echoes. In "Girl Talk," the Pips, minus Gladys Knight, cooled off the

beat with a folksy, street-corner session.

Sandwiched in between their latest chart winner "It Should Have Been Me," the group stomped through "Every Road Leads Out of Here," "Just Walk in My Shoes" and a soulful "Fever," which dropped to funky, part-way before it was rescued by the bluesy Miss Knight. The group, heard on Motown's Soul label, charged up the opening-night crowd with their fancy footwork, bursts of choreography and rally-round-the-microphone harmonizing. Even Al Foster and the Copa band reeled with the festivities, often overwhelming the voices with blaring horns and a beat like falling sequoia trees.

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