

Best Records You Can Select For Christmas Presents?

Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, vivacious 31-year-old director of the Smithsonian Program in Black American Culture, is vocal about her commitment to let the world know about the on-going contributions American Blacks have made, particularly as expressed in the performing arts.

Reagon is hardly a musty bureaucrat. The former SNCC Freedom Singer is a member of the acappella quartet Sweet Honey In The Rock. Honey recently celebrated their eighth anniversary with two sold-out standing ovation concerts at Howard University Law Center. They'll be in New York City December 4 and Lexington, KY. on December 5; their third album is due from Flying Fish Records before Christmas.

It should come as no surprise, then, that some of the best records that you can select for Christmas presents this year are from Reagon's department at the Smithsonian.

Reagon herself selected the cuts for the three disc "Voices Of The Civil Rights Movement." Ranging from uptempo to mournful soul

STROBE

by Tim Walter

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filled ballads, the dynamic expression of Black America's struggle for freedom is much too good musically to gather dust on the shelf. The lucky recipient will play this set over and over. \$21.48. Order on the Smithsonian's toll-free watts line.

Dr. Reagon tells me the 1973 entry, the six-record "Smithsonian Collection Of Classic Jazz" has now earned platinum status. Drawn from the archives of seventeen record companies, you'll find Scott Joplin playing "Maple Leaf Rag," John Coltrane playing "Alabama," Bessie Smith's "St. Louis Blues," Jelly Roll Morton's "Black Bottom Stomp" and much more. \$40.98.

Two new Ellington albums have

been introduced. "Symphony In Black" is a complete performance, for the first time, of his film score which won an Academy Award in

1935. The movie featured the young Billie Holiday. The Smithsonian Jazz Repertory Ensemble cut the disc. \$9.98. Ellington himself is captured on a double album "Duke Ellington 1941." Included are "Take The 'A' Train" and "Perdido" and 30 other superb selections from RCA's archives. \$15.23.

To order any of these unusual gifts, call the Smithsonian toll-free (800) 228-5454. Have your Visa or MasterCard credit card number handy; the line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mail orders should go to P. O. Box 10230,

Des Moines, Iowa 50336. Shipping and handling prices have been included in the prices I have quoted.

What else might make the perfect Christmas gift? "The George Benson Collection" is a solid two-record package, with everything from "White Rabbit" to his latest "Love All The Hurt Away" duet with Aretha Franklin. It's on Warner Brothers.

And Aretha's "Love All The Hurt Away" album is one of her best ever. Industry critics have lauded Diana Ross for her first self-produced RCA album, "Why Do Fools Fall In Love." At the risk of becoming a target for bricks thrown by Ross fans, I can only say I think she'll have to self-produce several more to really reach her potential. Her live performances, however, have never been better.

A superb, innovative mood album has been released by Tangerine Dream on Elektra. Called

"Exit," the imaginative, multi-lingual disc is the West Berlin trio's fifteenth. They cut the highly acclaimed soundtrack for "Thief."

In closing, here's a list of some artists I found somewhat unspectacular: Del Shannon, Lindsey Buckingham, The Jones Girls, Crusaders, Rossington Collins

Band, Lenny Williams, Bill Summers and Rufus with Chaka Khan. Maybe they'll click with their next albums; this year's offerings struck me more as formula schlock.

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Tips For Happy Holiday Season!

'Tis fast approaching the season to be merry and the feverish activity has already begun.

There are shopping expeditions ahead, holiday dinner parties to be planned, and keeping the kids out of the closet where the Christmas gifts are hidden will require constant patrol and some quick answers. Here are a few helpful suggestions for taking the strain out of the holiday season.

Make a list of what has to be done and spread the tasks out over a number of days. On days when you are entertaining try to rest for at least a half hour before guests arrive. Give yourself a facial, and take time to refresh yourself for the chores, even happy ones.

Try shopping by category - that is, toys one day, family gifts another, and for friends on still another day. Wear comfortable shoes. Take a pair of folding slippers with you and put them on when scotting from one counter to

another.

Stop and rest at reasonable intervals. Don't skip lunch above all, if you're taking the kids to see Santa, don't plan on making it a heavy day of shopping as well. The jingles will sound jangled if you do. Ease those muscle aches at night before retiring by taking an aspirin, and a warm bath. Keep in mind, too, that you can cut down your shopping mileage by using the catalogues that many stores send out at Christmas time.

Have you a green thumb? Start small plants well before the holiday season for gifting later on... or create a terrarium with a few small plants and an inexpensive fishbowl.

If you're handy with a needle, you can make gifts seem extra special by adding embroidered initials or motifs linen, shirts, etc.

Is there a nostalgia buff on your holiday list? With today's trend, chances are there are several!

Scour local secondhand shops for memorabilia.

Trapper John, M.D.

Dr. Stanley Riverside II, his eyes brimming with joyous tears, doesn't know he's being set up for a costly swindle when in rapid succession he is reunited with the beloved nanny who reared him in childhood and then with the real mother he never knew, on "Trapper John, M.D.," Sunday, December 6, at 10 p.m. on WBTV, Channel 3.

Little do the two confidence women suspect, though, that their scheme is about to backfire on them in a startling way.

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