

LaVern Baker - Sings Bessie Smith (1990)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Gimme A Pigfoot* 3:07 2. *Baby Doll* 3:37 3. *On Revival Day* 3:13 4. *Money Blues* 2:50
5. *I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle* 4:03 6. *Back Water Blues* 4:45 7. *Empty Bed Blues*
4:51 8. *There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight* 2:42 9. *Nobody Knows When You're*
Down And Out 3:58 [play](#) 10. *After You've Gone* 3:08 11. *Young Woman's Blues* 2:50 12.
Preaching The Blues 2:50 [play](#) Baritone Saxophone – Jerome
Richardson, Sahib Shihab Bass – Wendell Marshall Drums – Joe Marshall Guitar – Danny
Barker Piano – Nat Pierce Tenor Saxophone – Paul Quinichette Trombone – Jimmy
Cleveland, Urbie Green, Vic Dickenson Trumpet – Buck Clayton Vocals – LaVern Baker

La Vern Baker, better known for 1950's popular songs belts out a tour de force revival of Bessie Smith Classics. She combines Bessie's warm tone with the passion and jazz know-how of Dinah Washington. The accompanying instrumentals are authentic and appropriate, and perfectly balanced with LaVern's powerful voice. Unlike so many albums, this one is all good. The only remaining mystery is, that LaVern is not better known today as a jazz/blues diva of the highest magnitude, fully entitled to her rightful place alongside Etta James, Dinah Washington, and of course, Bessie Smith. ---T. H .von Zabern

'This is an album that should not have worked. LaVern Baker (a fine R&B singer) was joined by all-stars from mainstream jazz (including trumpeter Buck Clayton, trombonist Vic Dickenson, tenor-saxophonist Paul Quinichette and pianist Nat Pierce) for twelve songs associated with the great '20s blues singer Bessie Smith. Despite the potentially conflicting styles, this project is quite successful and often exciting. The arrangements by Phil Moore, Nat Pierce, and Ernie Wilkins do not attempt to re-create the original recordings; Baker sings in her own style (rather than trying to emulate Bessie Smith), and the hot solos work well with her vocals. '

---allmusic.com

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