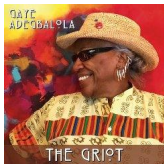


Gaye Adegbalola – The Griot (2019)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

Thursday, 22 April 2021 08:32 - Last Updated Thursday, 22 April 2021 09:58

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1 *Nothing's Changed* 4:05 2 *The Griot* 1:33 3 *Liearrhea* 4:02 4 *FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)* 4:13 5 *Dirty Sheets* 3:18 6 *(You're) Flint Water* 3:51 7 *Kaepernicked* 3:19 8 *Ain't Technology Grand* 4:20 9 *Gon' Be Alright* 4:32 10 *Don't Criticize Me* 4:27 11 *Nothing Left. . .* 5:46 12 *(There Is Always) One More Time* 4:56 13 *Need A Little Sugar in My Bowl* 2:56 14 *Tea Cake Kind of Love* 3:05 15 *3 Hour Shoes (Stylin' for the Lord)* 3:31 16 *Sorry, but. . . No Shame* 4:46 17 *Jelly Bean Blues* 5:03

Gaye Adegbalola Acoustic Slide Guitar, Composer, Guitar (Acoustic), Harmonica, Vocals Keith Armstead Organ Roddy Barnes Piano, Vocals Jeff Covert Acoustic Slide Guitar, Banjo, Bass, Drums, Guitars, Keyboards, Percussion, Vocals (Background) John Freund Guitar (Acoustic) Resa Gibbs Chant, Vocals (Background) Dan Haverstock Trombone Jackie Merritt Percussion Steve Patterson Saxophone Chris Sexton Cello Davis Smith Trumpet Zack Smith Trumpet

Gaye Adegbalola has never been shy about speaking her mind through music. As a 25-year member of Saffire – The Uppity Blues Women, she delivered the truth – both frankly and with a wry sense of humor. And she lays it on full force once again with this tasty solo effort.

A native of Fredericksburg, Va., a former biochemical researcher, bacteriologist, technical writer and Virginia State Teacher Of The Year, she's earned top honors across the board. Not only is she a Blues Music Award winner, but she's garnered the Parents Choice Gold Award for a CD targeted aimed at children. And she's also taken home prizes for her work as champion of empowerment and social justice.

A gifted songwriter, guitarist and harmonica player, Adegbalola carries forward the songster/storyteller of West Africa tradition – known as “griot” – with this release, the fifth album under her own name. She penned 14 of the 17 tunes here, which deal with everything from adult themes to mundane observations about everyday life. The uptempo opener, “Nothing’s

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Changed,” boldly states that racism in America remains strong despite the passage of time, that folks with big money still control everything and that there’s much more that we can do. The brief “The Griot” delivers a spoken-word description of this CD’s theme before the banjo-driven “Liarrhea” deals with folks who grin in your face while simultaneously spreading vicious untruths. Gaye warns the double-talkers, however, that she’s going to “love the hell right out of you.”

A quartet of strong political statements follow. A simple drumbeat and chant open “FGM,” which explodes into a diatribe against female genital mutilation, which still exists in some cultures today. The slow shuffle “Dirty Sheets” speaks about poverty and “(You’re) Flint Water” condemns pollution before “Kaepernicked” kicks off with a bar from “The Star-Spangled Banner” before evolving into a blues that both comforts and credits the NFL quarterback for taking a knee and protesting injustice with respect and dignity.

The themes brighten for the next trio of tunes. “Ain’t Technology Grand?” commends modern devices for putting the entire world in your hand and capture wrong for everyone to see while the ballad “Gon’ Be Alright” addresses loneliness in old age and “Don’t Criticize Me” warns not to complain unless “you can clap on the two and the four.”

The ballad “Nothing Left…” paints a tragic picture of mental illness before Gaye delivers a little hope with a cover of Doc Pomus’ “(There Is Always) One More Time.” Sex and romance are the themes in a take on Bessie Smith’s “Need A Little Sugar In My Bowl” and the original “Tea Cake Kind Of Love” before “3 Hour Shoes (Stylin’ For The Lord)” deals with the vanity. The disc concludes with “Sorry, But...No Shame,” a cry for freedom, and Ma Rainey’s “Jelly Bean Blues,” a tale of betrayal.

Available through most major retailers, and strongly recommended for anyone with a social conscience. Fair warning, however: Some of the lyrics contain explicit language. ---Marty Gunther, bluesblastmagazine.com

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