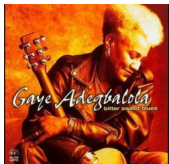


Gaye Adegbalola – Bitter Sweet Blues (1999)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
Friday, 30 April 2021 11:07 -

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1 *She Just Wants To Dance* 2 *Need A Little Sugar In My Bowl* 3 *You Don't Have To Take It (Like I Did)* 4 *Big Ovaries, Baby* 5 *Nothing's Changed* 6 *You Really Got A Hold On Me* 7 *The Dog Was Here First* 8 *Front Door Blues* 9 *Only One Truth* 10 *Prove It On Me Blues* 11 *Jail House Blues* 12 *Images* 13 *Nightmare* 14 *Let Go, Let God* Carl Adami Bass Gaye Adegbalola Guitar (Acoustic), Harmonica, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Ysaÿe M. Barnwell Vocals (Background) Warren Bernhardt Piano Rory Block Guitar (Acoustic), Vocals (Background) Clyde Connor Drums Mike DeMicco Guitar (Electric) Resa Gibbs Vocals (Background) Jerry Marotta Percussion Randy Mattson Bass Peter O'Brien Drums Juno Pitchford Vocals (Background) Tom Principato Guitar (Electric) Jordan Block Valdina Keyboards, Piano

With *Bitter Sweet Blues*, Gaye Adegbalola has produced an album that starts off where her work with Saffire the Uppity Blues Women left off, and jumps into a new, adventurous space. An expanded cast of musicians and more personal lyrics are some of the benefits to going solo, and Adegbalola makes use of both well. Each song has either humor or power, sometimes both. The only thing that seems incongruous is the mixture of songs with wildly varying moods and topics. While satirical woman-power songs like "Big Ovaries" are empowering and funny, when paired with "Nightmare" -- a powerful, personal song about child molestation -- the effect is somewhat gross. The feminist politics of both songs mesh rather well, but it is difficult for the listener to shift from laughing at bawdy sexuality to somber empathy in just a few tracks. Overall, though, this is a fine first solo effort that resonates with spirit and emotion. ---Stacia Proefrock, allmusic.com

Gaye Adegbalola (Ah-Deg-Ba-Lo-La) of the group Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women, has

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released a new solo album, "Bitter Sweet Blues." This album is filled with emotion! Adegbalola takes the listener through a musical journey from sadness and pain to a lighter, brighter world with tenderness, laughter and hope. Adegbalola has appeared on six other recordings with the contemporary post-feminist blues trio, Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women. Adegbalola received the W.C. Handy Award for Song of the Year in 1990 with, "The Middle Age Boogie Blues."

The album, "Bitter Sweet Blues" opens with a swingin' Keb' Mo'-Georgina Graper tune, "She Just Wants To Dance." Pianist Warren Bernhardt then slides into a Bessie Smith classic, "Need A Little Sugar In My Bowl" (C. Williams, T. Brymn & D. Small.) This delightful, easy-listening melody compliments the light-hearted lyrics, filled with sexual innuendo. Adegbalola also shines with her own fun, upbeat tune, "Big Ovaries, Baby!" She belts out the words: "I got big ovaries, baby....big enough to speak my mind... I'll fight for my rights, cuz, bitch is my middle name!"

Adegbalola uses humor in some of her lyrics and stunning raw truth in others. Her song, "You Don't Have To Take It (Like I Did)" and "Nothing's Changed" (Adegbalola & R. Block) both have serious messages. She sings with power and passion, stirring up a less-than-comfortable awareness. Adegbalola pushes boundaries with her music. Her collaboration with Rory Block produced a stunning piece of music, entitled "Nightmare," which deals with the subject of incest. Some listeners are bound to feel uncomfortable with such revealing lyrics--others will find the song sad, but moving. Bessie Smith's, "Jail House Blues" is such a powerful rendition, Adegbalola's pleading vocals, combined with the haunting percussion arrangement, strike a disturbing chord. Again...it's powerful, commanding music.

This album concludes with a memorable, "Let Go, Let God" (Adegbalola.) The great finger-pickin' acoustic guitar compliments the lyrics:

"I am listenin', but I cannot hear I am hurtin', but I can't shed a tear Oh, I am numb,
I'm numb and cold please take it off me--save my soul. I need to let go, I need to let
God... make me whole again."

Gaye Adegbalola's new CD, "Bitter Sweet Blues" is a powerful collection of music. Her songs provoke emotion and are delivered with some great tongue-in-cheek humor! There's also a

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great re-make of Smokey Robinson's, "You Really Got A Hold On Me!" Whether she's belting out Bessie Smith tunes, rocking out like Tina Turner, or singing smooth, sultry vocals, Adegbalola delivers a strong, memorable set of blues with the album, "Bitter Sweet Blues."

---Lisa Gault, mnblues.com

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