

Barbara Blue – Memphis 3rd & Beale (2004)

Written by bluesever

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1 24-7-365 2 *Rainy Night in Memphis* 3 *Don't Need No Man Like That* 4 *If I had you*
5 *Red Cadillac & The Blues* [play](#) 6 *Don't Put No Headstone On My Grave* 7 *Road*
Comes to Me 8 *(Shuffle) All Night Long* 9 *Careful Blues* 10 *Lie No Better* 11 *Lake*
Charles 12 *One Good Man* 13 *You Can't Stop My Love*
[play](#)

Lead Vocals: Barbara Blue Bass: Larry Fulcher Keyboards: Mike Finnigan Guitars: Johnny Lee Schell Drums and Percussion: Tony Braunagel Texicali Horns: Joe Sublett, tenor sax and Darrell Leonard, trumpet Background vocals: Susan Marshall, Nancy Apple & Julie Dalgado on tracks 1, 3, 4, & 10. Johnny Lee Schell on track 11 Special guest appearance by John "JUKE" Logan on Harmonica.

Barbara Blues e-mail address begins memphisqueen, and if that is an indication that she is known as the city's 'Queen of the Blues', then there will be no arguments from me, as this lady has talent in abundance, which no doubt explains the fact that her backing band is none other than Taj Mahal's Phantom Blues Band featuring the Texicali Horns of Joe Sublett (sax) and Darrell Leonard (trumpet).

The set opens with '24-7-365', BB strutting her stuff over a funky Stax styled horn riff, repeating the formula on 'Rainy Night In Memphis', but this time the funky riffs courtesy of Mike Finnigan's B3 and John 'luke' Logan's harp, giving this track a bluesier feel. The Stax sound rears its head again on 'I Don't Need No Man Like That', but this time BB voice mines a soulful R&B groove that is accentuated by Johnny Lee Schell's funky guitar chording.

'If I Had You' veers into deep soul territory, the backing vocals, baying horns and Joe Sublett's

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smokey sax solo echoing the poignancy of BB's vocals, which then take on a gritty arrogance, underpinned by Finnigan's percolating B3 and Schell's succinct guitar on 'Red Cadillac & The Blues'. Charlie Rich's 'Don't Put No Headstone On My Grave' is transformed into a deeply impassioned late night blues, baying horns and rolling piano swathed by Finnigan's B3 enhancing the perception of BB as a female Ray Agee.

If the first half of this set highlights BB's soul and R&B credentials, the second sees her getting "down and dirty" as her overtly sexual vocals ride a Muddy styled guitar riff on 'The Road Comes to Me', the "down in the alley" feel accentuated by moaning horns and slow rocking piano, a premise that is repeated on the brooding 'Careful Blues' with it's stomping piano and Junior Wells styled harp (Logan). 'One Good Man' continues in the same vein, as BB oozes sexual arrogance on this churning blues that reminds me of Muddy's 'You Need Love', Schell's guitar chiming as like BB he struts his sexuality proudly.

The Tex-Mex influenced 'countrified' soul of 'Lake Charles' and the gritty duet with Mike Finnigan on the Dixie influenced 50's styled R&B of 'You Can't Stop My Love' are further highlights of this impressive set. ---Mick Rainsford, Blues In Britain

If you never heard of Barbara Blue I hope you soon get the chance to hear her, for the lady from Memphis is really a great singer. On her album "Memphis 3rd & Beale" she gets great accompaniment by Taj Mahal's Phantom Blues Band and the Texicali Horns, so the playing is very tight and powerful. The musicians also helped in producing (drummer Tony Braunagel) and as engineer and mixer of the album (guitarist Johnny Lee Schell). Barbara Blue is the right singer for powerful Rhythm and Blues but is equally great as an interpreter of ballads as she proves in her version of Lucinda Williams' Lake Charles which divides her from singers only suited for power. For my taste she could do even more of this kind of material. On Janis Joplin's One Good Man (as on Don't Put No Headstone On My Grave by Charlie Rich) she really manages to sound like Janis' older sister. On 24-7-365, If I Had You and other pieces she shines like an uncrowned soul queen. And Barbara Blue is also a writer, getting writing and co-writing credits on four bluesy selections including the album's center piece The Road Comes To Me. As a singer both powerful and sensitive Barbara Blue really should get some attention. She is an independent artist and I think you won't find her records in stores, so those interested should look for information on her website. --- Ansgar Hillner, folkworld.de

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