

## Betty LaVette - Souvenirs (1973)

Written by bluesever

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01. *It Ain't Easy* 02. *Fortune Teller* 03. *Owr Own Love Song* 04. *Soul Tambourine* 05. *Your Turn To Cry* 06. *Ain't Nothing Gonna Change Me* 07. *All The Black And White Children* 08. *If I Can't Be Your Woman* 09. *Outside Woman* 10. *The Stealer* 11. *My Love Is Showing* 12. *Souvenirs* 13. *Heart Of Gold* 14. *You'll Wake Up Wiser* 15. *My Man - He's A Lovin' Man* 16. *Shut Your Mouth* 17. *You'll Never Change* 18. *Here I Am*

If the Billboard charts were sufficient to tell the complete story of an artist's career, you'd write off Betty Lavette in a heartbeat -- after scoring a Top Ten R&B hit with her 1963 Atlantic debut "My Man -- He's a Loving Man," Lavette never again returned to the same commercial heights, and the label soon terminated her contract. But she went on to make a series of devastatingly powerful deep soul records for a number of small independent labels, capped off by the 1965 cult classic "Let Me Down Easy," and by 1972 she was back in the Atlantic fold, this time signing to Atco to record a cover of Neil Young's "Heart of Gold" followed by an album's worth of material cut at Muscle Shoals with producer Brad Shapiro. But after the first single "Your Turn to Cry" flopped, the planned LP *Child of the 70s* was shelved, and Lavette was once again dropped. With the release of *Souvenirs*, the French Art & Soul label has done what Atlantic failed to do even with a mulligan: pay Lavette and her prodigious talent the respect they deserve. Compiling 18 tracks spanning both of her Atlantic tenures, including *Child of the 70s* in its entirety, *Souvenirs* proves Lavette once and for all a singer with the gutbucket grit and intensity of prime Aretha and Tina -- you can't listen to these songs without wondering what might have been if Atlantic had fully supported her career. ---Jason Ankeny, Rovi

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