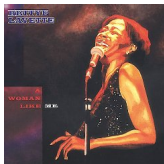


Betty LaVette - A Woman Like Me (2003)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 19 August 2013 16:02 - Last Updated Monday, 19 August 2013 16:09

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01. *Serves Me Right* 02. *The Forecast* 03. *Thru The Winter* 04. *Right Next Door* 05. *When The Blues Catch Up To You* 06. *Thinkin' Bout You* 07. *A Woman Like Me* 08. *It Ain't Worth It After A While* 09. *When A Woman's Had Enough* 10. *Salton My Wounds* 11. *Close As I'll Get To Heaven* 12. *Hey, Hey Baby (Betty's Blues)* Musicians: Bettye LaVette - Vocal Cynthia Bass - Vocal Backing Alan Mirikitani - Rhythm & Lead Guitar Mike Turner - Acoustic & Rhythm Guitar Bobby Murray - Rhythm Guitar Rudy Robinson - Keyboards Richard Cousins - Bass Lee Spath - Drums Bruce Paulson - Trombone Tom Peterson - Baritone & Tenor Sax; Horn Arrangements

"I can feel the pain, Lord, it's raining in my heart," Bettye LaVette howls on "The Forecast," and it sounds like it. On this stunning comeback -- her first American release in over 20 years -- the feisty soul singer rips through an hour of music with the pent-up hunger of a caged tiger at feeding time. Helped immeasurably by producer/songwriter Dennis Walker, best known for his breakout work with Robert Cray, LaVette moans, screams, shouts, pleads, and growls her way through a dozen tracks that'll leave even the most jaded R&B fan begging for more. One of the casualties of music biz politics, LaVette has a style that has only sharpened with age. In her mid-fifties at the time of this recording, the singer has a husky voice that tears at the edges, adding deeper emotion. Although the production leans toward the slick side, it leaves room for the singer to dominate each track. Walker, who wrote or co-wrote nine of these tunes, provides heart-tugging yet defiant material perfect for LaVette's take-no-prisoners approach. The singer plays the part of the scorned, aggressive woman, left behind but strong enough to know she's better off without that no-good scoundrel. Song titles such as "Salt in My Wounds," "Serves Him Right," and "It Ain't Worth It After a While" tell the story without having to hear a lyric. LaVette squeezes every ounce of emotion from this material, lashing into it with a barely contained explosive delight. Like a stage actress, she builds up the tension gradually until igniting in a shower of yelps and repeated phrases similar to Otis Redding at his most impassioned. This is a powerful album -- moving, intense, and honest -- from an artist desperately making up for lost time. It's a success for everyone involved, and deserves to put Bettye LaVette back on American stages where she belongs. ---Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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