

Bobby 'Blue' Bland – His California Album (1973)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 04 August 2011 18:29 - Last Updated Saturday, 24 August 2019 20:59

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1. *This Time I'm Gone for Good* - 3:36 2. *Up and Down World* - 3:36 3. *It's Not the Spotlight* - 3:56 4. *(If Loving You Is Wrong) I Don't Want to Be Right* - 3:55 5. *Goin' Down Slow* - 5:37
6. *The Right Place at the Right Time* - 3:00 [play](#) 7. *Help Me Through The Day* 8. *Where My Baby Went* - 3:22 [play](#) 9. *Friday the 13th Child* - 3:17 10. *I've Got to Use My Imagination* - 4:14

Personnel: Bobby "Blue" Bland (vocals); Ben Benay, David Cohen, Larry Carlton, Mel Brown, Dean Parks (guitar); Chuck Findley, Paul Hubinon, Dick Hyde, Ernie Watts, Jack Kelson Jr. (horns); Michael Omartian (piano, organ); Wilton Felder, Max Bennett (bass); Ed Greene (drums); Ginger Blake, Julia Tillman, Maxine Willard (background vocals).

Bobby "Blue" Bland is a master of the sly blues: just when you think a song is going to slip into a predictable blues groove, he cocks back and roars or tosses off a throaty growl that grabs at the base of your spine. It's always magic in person, nearly always magic on records. This CD is NOT his best work and it left me cold on the first few listens; it has a definite 70's quality (hey, it was recorded in 1973) that sometimes edges toward disco arrangements, but as I said, Mr. Bland is such a great master, he rescues it. "If Loving You is Wrong," a song that would (and should) bomb by any other artist is somehow twisted into a tight blues riff by Bland. Overall though, after leaving this in my stereo for several days, I've come to love the CD, despite the 70s song selections, and occasionally corny backing orchestrations, Bland's style and command of his voice rescues it. If you're buying your first Bland CD, look for his recent "Live on Beale Street" or classic "First Class Blues" but if you like a soft blues listen with great horns, give this a try. Not Bland at his best, to be sure, but you just have to love this guy's authenticity. Oh, and if you're a Van Morrison fan (as I am) you'll learn where Van finds a LOT of his horn and backing vocal arrangements. Van only borrows from the best. --- Jeff Wignall "The Joy of Digital Photography"

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Bland, who's in exceptionally good voice here, simmers his way through some cover songs that suit his impassioned delivery to a T, including Gladys Knight's "I've Got to Use My Imagination," Luther Ingram's "I Don't Want to Be Right," and Gerry Goffin's "It's Not the Spotlight." The album's high point, however, is the opening "This Time I'm Gone for Good," a beautiful, modern soul-blues plaint sung by Bland with just the right amount of intensity and regret. "Six Degrees of Bobby Bland" trivia: Trip-hop folkie Beth Orton covered "Spotlight" on the soundtrack to the 1999 Kevin Bacon film A Stir of Echoes.

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