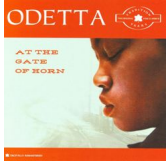


Odetta - At The Gates Of Horn (1957)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 16 September 2018 12:51 -

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A1 He's Got the Whole World in His Hands A2 Sail Away Ladies, Sail Away A3 The Gallows Pole A4 Lowlands A5 The Fox A6 Maybe She Go A7 The Lass From the Low Countree A8 Timber B1 Deep River B2 Chilly Winds B3 Green Sleeves B4 Devilish Mary B5 All the Pretty Little Horses B6 The Midnight Special B7 Take This Hammer Odetta - Primary Artist, Vocals, Guitar

Recorded in 1957, At the Gate of Horn is Odetta's sophomore effort and the first showcase of her extraordinary ability to interpret the American folk song. Her debut, Sings Ballads and Blues, wasn't a bad album, but it lacked the depth and fullness of the latter work. One notable difference, and a clue that Odetta wouldn't always toe the company line when it came to folk tradition, is the presence of bass player Bill Lee. Lee's bass adds rhythm and another layer of depth to songs like "Take This Hammer" and "Chilly Winds." Lee's bouncy bass also allows Odetta to abandon more conventional guitar strumming for frills and fills that are complementary to her vocal style. "Sail Away Ladies," for instance, is highlighted by a propulsive guitar run (almost qualifying as a boogie), pushing the song forward and perfectly underpinning her vocal. Although the title -- At the Gate of Horn -- suggests that the album is live, it isn't. The idea was to offer a replication of her Gate of Horn show at the time. There are odds and ends that don't really work here. The arrangement of "Greensleeves" is clunky, with Lee's bass bumping around as Odetta gives the impression that she's auditioning for a classical recital. Overall, though, At the Gate of Horn still serves as an excellent introduction to one of America's finest folk interpreters. ---Ronnie D. Lankford, Jr., AllMusic Review

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