

Alberta Hunter - Amtrak Blues (1978)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 27 December 2010 20:02 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 May 2021 14:15

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1. *The Darktown Strutters' Ball* 5:20
2. *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out* 3:48 [play](#)
3. *I'm Having A Good Time* 2:35
4. *Always* 3:41
5. *My Handy Man Ain't Handy No More* 3:46
6. *Amtrak Blues* 3:21 [play](#)
7. *Old Fashioned Love* 4:11
8. *Sweet Georgia Brown* 4:09
9. *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* 3:56
10. *I've Got A Mind To Ramble* 4:13

Bass, Contractor – Aaron Bell Drums – Jackie Williams Guitar – Billy Butler Piano, Leader – Gerald Cook Tenor Saxophone, Clarinet – Norris Turney Tenor Saxophone, Flute – Frank Wess Trombone – Vic Dickenson Trumpet – "Doc" Cheatham

Amazing woman, Alberta Hunter recorded this wonderful album at the age of 83 - great survivor of the original blues craze of 1920's, she was a contemporary of Bessie Smith (Bessie's very first hit "Downhearted blues" was actually written by Alberta Hunter!) and all the other blues greats, and somehow she endured all the way up to 1978. when she recorded "Amtrak Blues". Yes, you can tell it's an old voice, but she had such a character that made listening pure fun - her version of these old standards are simply undecipherable, she sounds like a great old lady, sometimes even dirty (You never heard "My Handy Man" if you didn't hear this one - in comparison, Ethel Waters' version from the 1920's is simply a nice little song, Alberta makes a listener blush). Interesting, I found this late Alberta Hunter period much more interesting than her younger phase. In the 1920's and 1930's she was never such a character as here - just as late albums by Ida Cox, Sippie Wallace or Victoria Spivey show, these women actually got better with age. This album is really heart-warming, showing that character never dies, age doesn't mean anything and one is young as he feels.

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These 'standards' are anything but; Alberta Hunter's versions are unbeatable. She has that kind of voice and rhythm that seem so natural and yet, like Billie Holiday, defy the human range thus placing her in the pantheon of jazz greats. She is earthy yet refined and completely in touch with the band, she moans and cries at places that you'll find yourself wondering how she got there. "Darktown Strutters Ball", "Georgia Brown" and the intensely down and dirty "My Handyman" are sensual, comic and dramatically original-your body will react- guaranteed. Unpredictably fresh, this late great senior citizen packs all she's got and all we need, right in to each piece. I have given this CD as a gift to many people and they have all been smitten and grateful.
---amazon.com

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