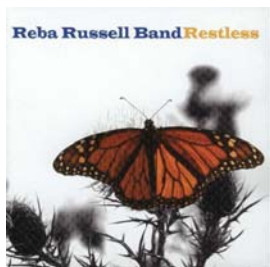


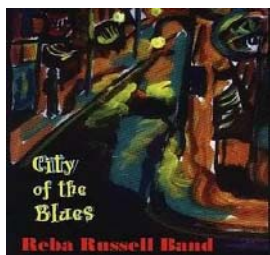
Reba Russell CD Reviews

"Blues Revue" - December-January 2003 Author: Hal Horowitz



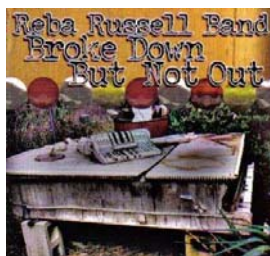
Though Memphis has never regained the soul-blues luster it seemed to naturally exude in the '60's and '70's, it's still home to a thriving scene. Reba Russell isn't exactly leading the city back to its glory days, but she's a stunning example of how its sound is still alive and well. Blues, soul, funk, gospel, and rock 'n' roll have long been the major ingredients in the city's barbecue, and Russell adds simmering hot sauce to the concoction. With strains of Lou Ann Barton's sassy twang, Susan Tedeschi's gritty R&B, and Tracy Nelson's bone shaking power, Russell croons, grinds, and testifies through 11 examples of Memphis music. Drawing predominantly from originals written by the singer and her longtime band. Restless also offers a version of Jimmy Thackery's "Putting Out Fires (That Ain't Started Yet)" that has her pounding it out with teeth-rattling conviction Russell's tough voice is lightened by a touch of innocence mixed with sly, subtle sexuality. One listen to the stirring ballad "Back to You" where the singer reaches into the song and socks you in the gut with her intensity, should convince anyone she's one of the finest white R&B singers working today. Like Russell herself, Restless is Memphis to its core.

"Blues Matters" (International Blues & Blues Rock Review Magazine/March-June 2001 - Issue No. 4 - Michael Messer and John Mayall



This is another one of those quality self releases from the States, coming from Reba Russell & Dawn Hopkins "Blue Eyed Bitches" Production Company. Reba can be categorized as one of the pretty white girls with a gravely rock edge to her voice. Reba comes over at times like Bonnie Raitt & Kathy McDonald, I'm not suggesting she's a sound alike, just that she is endowed with high quality tonsils. Reba Russell is a veritable Tardis, small on the outside, with a great big voice from within, if you log on to www.rebarussell.com, you will find that Reba is a very in demand vocalist, having guested on a who's who of top albums says our Billy Hutchinson. Reba has written two songs of her own, while R. Tooms, J. Sheicke & W. Russell pen one each & one collectively. That leaves covers by J. Sanders, Chips. Moman, W. Dixon, B. Flett & F. Knobloch/Steve Goodman. The band is predominately R&B, but apart from raunchy beltors there's also a country ballad, burlesque and a jump jive number. A dedication to the late Frank Frost is a drawn out sleazy groove, with a gospel chorus that gushes in, on "Heaven Came to Helena". The band do a slightly different arrangement of "Love is Forever" than the one to be found on Jelly Roll Johnson's CD "and a few friends", by the songs co-author Fred Knobloch. There's an interesting duet with Tracy Nelson on Willie Dixon's "When the Lights Go Out", which is under promoted in the small print of the liner notes. How do I rate Mrs. Russell? . . . well I'd think twice about putting a Susan Tedeschi CD on when there's a Reba Russell one lying around. Arriba Reba!

Blues Revue Review #21 / 05- Eric Thom -November 11 2005 Reba Russell Band Broke Down But Not Out (Blue Eyed Bitches Productions)



Somewhere between the full throated, gospel charged firepower of Bonnie Bramlett and the gentle, seductive soul of early Rita Coolidge, you'll find Memphis singer songwriter Reba Russell sitting pretty. Like Coolidge and Bramlett, she's made her name as backup singer providing aural ammunition for acts ranging from Jimmy Thackery, Johnny Cash and U2, to Tracy Nelson and Walter Trout. So, after taking part in hundreds of productions together with five solid solo records of her own, the fact that she's learned a thing or two along the way is self-evident with Broke Down. Subtlety and the school of less is more is a lesson learned from friend and Memphis-based mentor Jim Dickinson. It is what this release is all about as Russell showcases her own tunes, some of her band members and a blend of covers by EG Kight and William Lee Ellis. The result is a near-eclectic set of 13 songs that run the gamut of blues, R&B and everything -in-between, reflective of her chosen home town. Reba jumps into the salaciously delightful "Got A One Track Mind" - a song destined to induce wolf howls from her male fans for life. Blessed with a pure, clear voice, Russell adds smoke to the fire with "Sister Friend" - a funky group grope that celebrates sisters, involving a neo-gospel chorus (compliments of the Beavas) and some crisp guitar from Josh Roberts. The blues dial is turned up with "Your Up is Down" as Robert Nighthawk Tooms' double duty on piano and harp ups the honky tonk on this Ellis number. Russell's torchy take on Kight's "Just One More" shows her lighter, sweeter side, if not her Coolidge influence. Wayne Russell's Off the Clock (and on the floor) takes a swipe at crappy jobs, spiced up by Rick Steff's accordion for added zydeco zest, yet her vocals are better suited to another original, "Need A Healin", which pumps up Tooms' harp and Roberts' guitar, testifying even more convincingly. The hazy groove of "Just Stay Stoned" makes more of the combination of her crack rhythm section of James Robertson (drums) and Husband, Wayne Russell (bass) as guitarist Roberts and B3 player Tooms get longer leashes. "House Of Love" is a power track that-once again- underlines Russell's sultry side as she moves from simmer to boil. Think Sugar Walls as Josh Roberts' guitar takes on a southern sound, bathed in the warmth of Tooms' understated B3. "Without Your Love" is a key track, exercising Russell's gospel side as it digs a little deeper into her soul side, bolstered by a strong back-up chorus and Tooms' churchy B3. Russell is comfortable vamping up Kight's "It Takes a Mighty Good Man" with the help of Tooms' sensational piano and and harp work while "Rivertown" gets tough, ramping up guitar and harmonica and overall intensity. The album's most affecting track is Russell's own "Paint it Red", which documents Memphis and its unwillingness to preserve its past in an unthinking quest for its future. Clearly her heart is behind this admonition - you can hear the hurt in her voice, accentuated by Robert's crying turns on slide guitar - this is the stuff that cripples bad politicians. "Hard to Live" closes out the album with an upbeat blues track that is a soulful cry for more love in a cold world, the band at home with a tight groove under Russell's commanding lead. Wake up to a big voice with a big heart and a bag of tricks that has yet to show bottom. Reba Russell is doing it her way, independently, and taking her crack band with her. She's a little more refined on this outing and, like a favorite, full-bodied wine, the finish is smooth and rewarding.