

Fiona Boyes - Blues Woman (2009)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Woman Ain't a Mule* 02. *Howlin' At Your Door* 03. *I Want To Go* 04. *Train to Hopesville* 05. *Look Out Love!* 06. *Got My Eye on You* 07. *Do You Feel Better?* 08. *The Barrelhouse Funeral* 09. *Place of Milk and Honey* 10. *Waiting for Some Good News* 11. *Precious Time* 12. *Fishin' Hole* 13. *City Born Country Gal* 14. *Juke Joint on Moses Lane* 15. *Old Time Ways*
Fiona Boyes (vocals, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, slide guitar, resonator guitar); Pinetop Perkins (vocals, piano); Derek O'Brien (guitar); Kaz Kazanoff (harmonica, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, percussion); Marcia Ball, Nick Connolly (piano); Jimi Bott (drums, bongos, washboard, percussion).

A lot of interesting things have been written about Fiona Boyes, but one of the most attention-grabbing came from Midwest Record Recap -- which said that the Australian singer/guitarist "sounds like Bonnie Raitt's evil twin." While that comment was amusing, it was also insightful; Boyes does, in fact, have a strong Raitt influence (with elements of Marcia Ball and Rory Block), but her approach is noticeably darker, swampier, and more mysterious than Raitt's. Boyes is clearly her own person, and one of the great things about *Blues Woman* is the fact that she is so hard to pin down stylistically. The Aussie is blues-oriented -- that much is clear -- but during the course of this album, she embraces everything from electric Chicago blues on the Howlin' Wolf-influenced "Howlin' at Your Door" to early R&B (of the late-'40s/early-'50s variety) on "Do You Feel Better?" to blues-soul on "Train to Hopesville" and "Waiting for Some Good News." Although Boyes plays electric guitar on many of the tracks, she is also an excellent acoustic guitarist -- and her mastery of the acoustic guitar is evident on the Mississippi Delta blues-minded "Place of Milk and Honey." Texas blues is also part of the equation on this 2008 recording; so are Louisiana and Memphis blues. And through it all, Boyes never fails to be recognizable. For Boyes, having a blues orientation doesn't mean being a blues purist; she isn't someone who believes that everything on a blues-oriented album must adhere to a traditional 12-bar format or that blues artists must refrain from having rock or soul influences. But everything on *Blues Woman* boasts a wealth of blues feeling, and Boyes' love of variety yields consistently excellent results throughout this gem of an album. --- Alex Henderson, allmusic.com

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