

Zora Young - The French Connection (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1 Zora Young *Better Be Ready* 4:08 2 Zora Young *Goin' Back To Memphis* 5:11 3
Zora Young *Wang Dang Doodle* 5:19 4 Zora Young *I'm In Love With You* 3:47 5 Zora
Young *Honey Bee* 5:56 6 Zora Young *Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You* 3:21 7 Zora
Young *Just A Closer Walk With Thee* 4:03 8 Zora Young *See See Rider* 4:24 9 Zora
Young *In The Ghetto* 6:00 10 Zora Young *Mystery Train* 5:06 11 Zora Young *I'm Movin'
On* 4:36 12 Zora Young *Toxic* 8:36 13 Zora Young *Goin' Back To Memphis (version 2)*
3:47 14 Zora Young *Rock Me Baby* 5:57 Zora Young – vocals Bobby Dirninger -
guitars, organ, percussion, piano, producer, slide guitar Catherine “Cajun” Girard - washboard

The French Connection is the new CD from Chicago based blues singer Zora Young. It's being distributed in the U.S. by her long-time label, Delmark Records. The CD, a collaboration with French multi-instrumentalist Bobby Dirninger, is the fruit of a relationship built over 20 years of touring together. The CD features 14 tracks with three different bands recorded over a period of 15 months including five live tracks and nine studio recordings. The live songs come from three different shows from Zora's 2008 tour in France.

Stretching beyond the boundaries of traditional Chicago blues, Zora's music is flavored with heavy doses of gospel, pop, country and soul. With the ad-libbing, improvising and commentary (that is so much a part of a Chicago blues woman's show) woven seamlessly into the fabric of this CD, listening to this disc is the next best thing to actually being at a Zora Young performance. She sings with a bold, unhurried, honesty that seems like a confession. She is deliciously imperfect. Your ears are caressed by the warm intimate feel of Zora's vocal delivery. Her innate sense of phrasing and her supreme confidence never overshadow her quiet dignity. This is a sultry, sassy sistah with no shame in her game, Zora Young at her finest.

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Zora and Bobby chose the 14 songs together, except for In The Ghetto, chosen by Chris Dussuchaud, who produced the project along with Dirninger and Pasbal Theneau-Beige. The idea was to make a record that was half electric and half acoustic. Chris Dussuchaud, a French journalist and long-time Zora fan, is the one who asked for an acoustic flavor on the CD. The choice of material was surprisingly eclectic. There are the few blues chestnuts, to be sure, but there are tunes on this disc that really showcase Zora's artistic range, set in spare or lush arrangements that (unlike some American ensembles I've heard her with) get out of her way and let her sing!

The unifying elements that tie all these dissimilar tracks together, aside from the unmistakable voice of Zora Young, are Bobby Dirninger's hot, honey dripping slide guitar and the overall feel. This CD is enhanced by the amazing rhythmic talent of Catherine "Cajun" Girard on washboard.
---Liz Mandeville, chicagobluesguide.com

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