

Maggie Bell - The River Sessions (2004)

Written by bluesever

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1 Blue Suede Shoes 5:58 2 Try A Little Tenderness 6:16 3 As The Years Go Passing By 6:26 4 Only Women Bleed 5:58 5 Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City 5:04 6 Good Man Monologue 5:07 7 Trade Winds 5:53 8 No Mean City 4:45 9 Every Little Bit Hurts 4:55 10 That's The Way I Feel 7:03

When Maggie Bell's group Stone The Crows broke up in 1973 it was time for Britain's finest female singer to launch her solo career. Since her earliest days in Glasgow, the Scots lass with the soulful voice had been impressing audiences with her powerful and passionate style. --- recordheaven.net "The River Sessions" catches Glasgow-born Maggie Bell back home, recording live at the Pavillion, Glasgow on November 1, 1993. The dynamic soul singer/blues belter has given us another female-oriented album: at one point she complains that she's being forced to do men's compositions, and wonders where the women writers are these days; then says, never mind, she's begun writing songs herself. But not to worry: this record is an hour's worth of "real" songs, and then some.

Bell opens with a New Orleans funkified take on the rockabilly favorite "Blue Suede Shoes," a song that apparently can trace its lineage back to the Gaelic Scots that settled the state of Georgia. She dares to take on Otis Redding's "Try A Little Tenderness," dedicates it to her Glasgow mother, and does right by Redding -- and her Mom. "As the Years Go Passing By," a blues as good live as the studio take on her first solo album, "Queen of the Night." Ditto for "Trade Winds." Womack and Womack's "Good Women, Good Men," previously done by American blues star Bonnie Raitt. (And Maggie's happy to say she's got herself a good man, a Dutchman: she now lives in Holland.) Alice Cooper's "Only Women Bleed." She reaches back to an obscure Brenda Holloway number, "Every Little Bit Hurts," and closes with Delbert McClinton's "The Way I Feel."

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We also get Bobby Bland's "Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City," perhaps recorded here as a Glasgow-oriented companion piece to the soon-to-follow, magnificent "No Mean City." That was used as the theme song of "Taggart," the Scottish television show heard 'round the world, for years and years. This piercing, keening song she dedicates to everyone there that night: "There's your song. It's about you." It's also the best reason to get this album. Bell has been heard to remark that, though this song was a hit single, she'd sure love another hit album; but listen, this song certainly has legs. --- Stephanie De Pue, amazon.com

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