

Janis Joplin - The Essential Janis Joplin (2003)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 05 November 2013 17:05 - Last Updated Sunday, 12 July 2020 12:47

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CD 1 1. *Down On me* 2. *Coo Coo* 3. *Women Is Losers* 4. *Bye, Bye Baby* 5. *Ball and Chain (en vivo)* 6. *Roadblock* 7. *Piece Of My Heart* 8. *Misery'n* 9. *I Need A Man To Love* 10. *Summertime* 11. *Flower In The Sun (en vivo)* 12. *Farewell Song (en vivo)* 13. *Raise Your Hand (en vivo)* 14. *To Love Somebody (en vivo) [*]* 15. *Kozmic Blues (en vivo) [*]* CD 2 1. *Try (Just a little bit harder)* 2. *Maybe* 3. *One good Man* 4. *Little Girl Blue* 5. *Work Me, Lord* 6. *Tell Mama (en vivo)* 7. *Move Over* 8. *Cry Baby* 9. *A Woman Left Lonely* 10. *Half Moon* 11. *My Baby* 12. *Me And Bobby McGee* 13. *Mercedes Benz* 14. *Trust Me* 15. *Get It While You Can*

Columbia has managed to squeeze an impressive, perhaps excessive, number of compilations out of Janis Joplin's relatively slim body of recordings. With this two-CD set, *The Essential Janis Joplin*, the label's at it again, though it's a good one to get if you don't want to collect all the Joplin releases, and certainly don't want to get the expensive Joplin boxes, but want more than what fits onto a single disc. Including both solo recordings and highlights of her stint with Big Brother & the Holding Company, it has all the songs fans and critics would consider milestones in her career: "Ball and Chain" (a version recorded live in 1967 at the Monterey Pop Festival, not the more familiar one from *Cheap Thrills*), "Piece of My Heart," "Down on Me," "Summertime," "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)," "Tell Mama" (the live 1970 performance from the expanded edition of *Pearl*), "Get It While You Can," "Mercedes Benz," and "Me and Bobby McGee." And there are also good tracks that aren't as overly familiar, like "Coo Coo," "Misery'n," "Maybe," "Work Me, Lord," and "A Woman Left Lonely." The substitution of the less familiar renditions of "Ball and Chain" and "Tell Mama" might rankle some consumers expecting to hear the more common ones, but that's frankly unlikely. So what does the set offer to those Joplin fans who already have a lot of her material? Well, not much, but in the time-honored manner of attaching bonus tracks to oft-recycled material, this does have a couple of previously unissued live cuts ("Kozmic Blues" and the Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody") from her 1969 set at Woodstock. Those songs are actually reasonably good, but aren't worth buying the whole set for. They would have been a better deal if served out as part of a legit collection of her Woodstock performances, or as a collection of previously unreleased live Joplin performances, if enough high-caliber stuff of the sort was available. ---Richie Unterberger, AllMusic Review

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