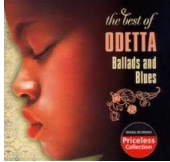


Odetta - The Best of Odetta Ballads and Blues (1994)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 03 June 2012 21:25 - Last Updated Sunday, 09 June 2013 12:52

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1. "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" – 1:59 2. "Lowlands" – 2:41 3. "The Fox" – 1:53 4. "The Lass from the Low Cowntree" (John Jacob Niles) – 4:40 5. "Devilish Mary" – 1:57 6. "Take This Hammer" (Ledbetter) – 3:33 7. "Greensleeves" – 2:49 8. "Deep River" – 3:00 9. "Chilly Winds" – 2:43 10. "If I Had a Ribbon Bow" – 2:43 11. "Shame and Scandal" – 2:23 12. "'Buked and Scorned" – 2:40 13. "Joshua" – 1:54 14. "Glory, Glory" – 2:13 15. "Been in the Pen" – 2:32 16. "Deep Blue Sea" – 3:02 17. "God's Gonna Cut You Down" – 1:51 18. "Spiritual Trilogy" – 6:05 Personnel Odetta – vocals, guitar Bill Lee – bass

The title The Best of Odetta sets a standard that the contents of this disc are unable to meet, even though the material is valuable. It would be difficult to assemble a true Odetta best-of, because the folksinger's recordings are extensive and have covered the labels Fantasy (1954-1955), Tradition (1956-1957), Vanguard (1959-1962 with releases continuing into 1963), Riverside (1962), RCA Victor (1962-1965), and Verve Folkways (1966-1967). But the concern here is solely the Tradition material, which consists of a total of 31 tracks that originated on two albums, Odetta Sings Ballads and Blues (1956) and Odetta at the Gate of Horn (1957). The Best of Odetta is a truncated repackaging of this material, an 18-track disc excerpting nine selections from Odetta at the Gate of Horn followed by nine from Odetta Sings Ballads and Blues. On it, an Odetta in her mid-twenties gives mesmerizing performances of traditional folk and blues standards in her trademark contralto, accompanying herself on acoustic guitar or singing a cappella. (Bill Lee plays bass on the tracks from Odetta at the Gate of Horn.) These are good performances, and any folk fan should have some version of the Tradition recordings. But the album's title makes a promise the music itself does not keep. (The Best of Odetta has been reissued under the title The Best of Odetta: Ballads & Blues.) --- William Ruhlmann, Rovi

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