

Shemekia Copeland - America's Child (2018)

Written by bluesever

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01. Ain't Got Time For Hate 02. Americans 03. Would You Take My Blood? 04. Great Rain 05. Smoked Ham And Peaches 06. The Wrong Idea 07. Promised Myself 08. In The Blood Of The Blues 09. Such A Pretty Flame 10. One I Love 11. I'm Not Like Everybody Else 12. Go To Sleepy Little Baby Shemekia Copeland - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Pete Abbott - Drums Steve Cropper - Guitar Paul Franklin - Pedal Steel Guitar Mary Gauthier - Vocals (Background) Rhiannon Giddens - Banjo Lisa Oliver Gray - Vocals (Background) Emmylou Harris - Vocals (Background) Will Kimbrough - Guitar, National Steel Guitar, Organ, Vocals (Background) Al Perkins - Guitar, Pedal Steel Guitar Gretchen Peters - Vocals (Background) Lex Price - Bass John Prine - Vocals (Background) Katie Pruitt - Vocals (Background) Kenny Sears - Fiddle Kristi Stassinopoulou - Vocals (Background) J.D. Wilkes - Harmonica Tommy Womack - Vocals (Background)

Titling an album *America's Child* in 2018 can't help but feel like a political move and, sure enough, Shemekia Copeland doesn't shy away from a statement on this, her eighth album. Copeland isn't interested in taking sides, per se. Instead, Copeland uses *America's Child* as a salute to how weird, wild, and wondrous America is at its best. Fittingly for an album whose aesthetic sees no borders, *America's Child* casts its net wide sonically, finding room for a number of rootsy sounds and a host of cameos. Working with producer Will Kimbrough, Copeland invites Rhiannon Giddens to play banjo on "Smoked Ham and Peaches," duets with John Prine on a new version of his old tune "Great Rain," sings harmony with Emmylou Harris, and is supported by a band that occasionally features guitarist Steve Cropper and members of the Time. Despite all of these stars, *America's Child* remains focused on Shemekia Copeland herself, who provides a powerful yet nuanced center for the album. It's not just that her singing is soulful and supple; it's how she views blues as a living, breathing art form, not a static sound. Chalk that up in part to the Americana twang that surfaces throughout the album, but *America's Child* also finds room for allusions to African music, swampy rock, the British Invasion, and sweaty soul. More importantly, Shemekia Copeland pushes empathy and understanding to the forefront of her record, all the while sounding defiant and strong. Consequently, *America's Child* doesn't simply address the tumult in 2018 America, it stands as a vital statement of purpose from a modern blues singer who is beginning to hit her stride. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine,

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