

Ella Mae Morse - Barrelhouse, Boogie And The Blues (1954)

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A1 Rock Me All Night Long A2 Money Honey A3 I Love You, Yes I Do A4 Daddy, Daddy B1 Teardrops From My Eyes B2 5-10-15 Hours B3 Have Mercy Baby B4 How Can You Leave A Man Like This Ella Mae Morse - vocals Big Dave And His Orchestra

Ella Mae Morse would have objected to the title of this box set, appropriated from the name of a 1954 LP, since it was her contention that she never performed "Barrelhouse," but there is little else to fault with this extensive five-disc box set of her complete Capitol recordings from 1942-1957. Beginning with her collaborations with Freddie Slack (including her career-launching hit "Cow-Cow Boogie") and similar jazz and pop novelties, the set follows Morse through pop and jazz standards, her duets with Tennessee Ernie Ford, sessions with Les Baxter and Nelson Riddle, covers of R&B hits, and odd quasi-rock & roll experiments. Perhaps because of her Texas upbringing Morse was often saddled with hillbilly leaning material, although sometimes, as on her version of the Little Jimmy Dickens hit "A-Sleepin' at the Foot of the Bed" and her gender-reversed take on Hank Snow's "The Gal Who Invented Kissin'," the results are much closer to jazz than country. Because of her flirtations with hillbilly music Morse is not taken as seriously as Peggy Lee or Anita O'Day by jazz critics, which is not only a shame because of its marginalization of an obviously talented artist but because it starkly reveals the class and genre prejudices that continue to shape critical opinions of popular music. Cutting away the dross, Morse was a gifted and awesomely bluesy vocalist who was guided through an unusual and sometimes unbecoming musical terrain, and listening to her complete Capitol recordings offers a fascinating microcosm of the stresses and strains resulting from hybridization in popular music in the '40s and '50s. ---Greg Adams, AllMusic Review

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