

Archie Shepp - Blue Ballads (1995)

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1. *Little Blue Girl* 2. *More Than You Know* 3. *Blue In Green* 4. *Blue And Sentimental* 5. *Cry Me A River* 6. *If I Should Lose You* 7. *Alone Together* Musicians: Archie Shepp - Tenor Saxophone, Soprano Saxophone, Vocals John Hicks -Piano George Mraz - Bass Idris Muhammad – Drums

Recorded in November 1995, saxophonist Archie Shepp's *Blue Ballads* is a counterpart to *True Ballads* and *Something to Live For*, which date from the same period. All three albums feature pianist John Hicks, bassist George Mraz, and drummer Idris Muhammad. These intimate studies in shared introspection, along with *Black Ballads* and *True Blue*, document Shepp's astute exploration of the ballad form during the 1990s. On *Blue Ballads* Shepp mingled time-honored standards such as Rodgers & Hart's "Little Girl Blue," Arthur Schwartz's "Alone Together," and Vincent Youmans' "More Than You Know" with the Miles Davis-Bill Evans masterpiece "Blue in Green" and "Blue and Sentimental," which had served as the feature number for Count Basie's star tenor saxophonist Herschel Evans some 60 years earlier. Once again and in all the best ways, Shepp shines in parallel with his contemporary Pharoah Sanders. Both are skilled balladeers as well as free spirits who simply cannot be bottled or pigeonholed. --- arwulf arwulf, Rovi

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