Eric Bibb Rory Block Maria Muldaur – Sisters & Brothers (2004)

1. Rock Daniel [2:09] 2. Don't Ever Let Nobody Drag Your Spirit Down [3:27] 3. Get Up Get Ready [4:28] 4. Lean On Me [4:06] 5. Bessie's Advice [7:17] 6. Good Stuff [3:02] play *7. Rolling Log [2:49]*
play
8. Gotta Serve Somebody [5:34] 9. Travelin' Woman Blues [4:29] 10. Little Rain [4:06] 11. Maggie Campbell [2:58] 12. Give A Little More [3:20] 13. My Sisters & Brothers [4:44]
Personnel: Eric Bibb - vocals, guitar Rory Block - vocals, guitar Maria Muldaur - vocals Per Hanson - drums Mudcat Ward - double bass, upright bass Chris Burns - piano, Wurlitzer piano, Wurlitzer organ.

As its title implies, this is a spiritually based collaboration from three distinct -- even disparate -- yet surprisingly harmonious voices. Mostly, but not entirely acoustic, the trio of rootsy singers trade lead vocals on smooth jazz/blues ("Bessie's Dream"), folk-blues ("Good Stuff"), Delta blues ("Rolling Log"), gospel (an a cappella version of Sister Rosetta Tharpe's "Rock Daniel"), and combinations of those genres. On paper it sounds scattershot, but in actuality this is a thoughtfully paced combination of styles, united by three affecting voices. Eric Bibb's smoother Keb' Mo' approach meshes surprisingly well with Rory Block's more penetrating Delta croon and Maria Muldaur's sassy, sexy, throaty growl. Covers of Jimmy Reed's "Little Rain" and Bob Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody" with Bibb taking lead, and Bill Withers' "Lean on Me" (Muldaur and Block) show the disc's wide stylistic range. A musical seminar in how diverse types of music interbreed and influence each other, all three singers are in the moment with nobody commanding the spotlight for long. The barrelhouse honky tonk piano blues of Block's "Travelin' Woman Blues" incorporates both Muldaur's and Block's singing in the album's most convincing duet. Only a few songs such as the closing title track feature all three voices, and the album might have benefited from more instances where they all contribute. But the vocalist's exuberance soars from the grooves and creates a lively yet relaxed vibe that's contagious and often thrilling. The result is a cohesive, soulful, and powerful disc that will hopefully inspire listeners to find more material from each of its headliners. ---Hal Horowitz, AllMusic Review

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