

Irma Thomas – After The Rain (2006)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 11 September 2018 14:35 - Last Updated Friday, 19 February 2021 20:52

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01. *In The Middle Of It All* 4:45 02. *Flowers* 4:22 03. *I Count The Tears* 3:03 04. *Make Me A Pallet On Your Floor* 4:30 05. *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free* 3:03 06. *If You Knew How Much* 2:27 07. *Another Man Done Gone* 3:49 08. *Till I Can't Take It Anymore* 3:27 09. *These Honey Do's* 4:27 10. *Another Lonely Heart* 4:20 11. *Soul Of A Man* 3:01 12. *Stone Survivor* 3:49 13. *Shelter In The Rain* 4:14

Irma Thomas - Primary Artist, Vocals David Torkanowsky - Hammond B3, Piano, Piano (Electric) Corey Harris - Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric) Sonny Landreth - Slide Guitar Dirk Powell - Fiddle, Fretless Banjo, Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric) David Egan - Piano James Singleton - Bass (Acoustic) Stanton Moore - Drums, Percussion Scott Billington - Tambourine Juanita Brooks, Marc Broussard, Charles "Chucky C" Elam, III - Vocals (Background)

A rumor circulated after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast at the close of summer in 2005 that Louisiana soul great Irma Thomas was one of the missing. The rumor, fortunately, turned out to be false -- she was gigging at the time in Austin -- but Thomas' New Orleans home was completely destroyed. The shadow of Katrina hangs large over *After the Rain*, Thomas' first new album in six years, and several of the songs take on an added poignancy because of the tragedy, most tellingly the cover of Arthur Alexander's "In the Middle of It All" which opens this set and a stunning version of the traditional blues spiritual "Another Man Done Gone" with its telling line "another storm has come." It would be easy to call this album Thomas' response to the devastation, and to a great extent it is, but except for "Another Man Done Gone," all of the songs here were chosen for the recording sessions well before Katrina developed. Coincidence or not, though, the dominant image in these tracks is one of rain, of storms washing things away, and Thomas gives each song a kind of elegant resignation with her low-key vocal approach, until the whole album seems like one long whispered effort to recapture hope in the future. Storms wash things away, often things we dearly love, Thomas seems to be saying, and here is what we're left with, ourselves and our need to believe that there's a reason for all of the pain we're forced to carry. Mostly muted and acoustic, *After the Rain* cautiously stretches out like a slow train pulling away from the platform, and tracks like "Another Man Done Gone," the old blues nugget "Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor," and a stripped-down (just acoustic guitar, banjo, and percussion) version of Blind Willie Johnson's blues gospel classic "Soul of a Man" all

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share a certain restless searching for answers. Maybe there aren't any answers. Another storm has come. Not everything can be washed away. That, at least, is something to cling to, and After the Rain, in the end, is gently hopeful. ---Steve Leggett, AllMusic Review

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