

Imelda May - No Turning Back (2007)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 17 February 2012 09:38 - Last Updated Tuesday, 17 April 2018 21:24

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01 dealing with the devil [play](#) 02 flame of love 03 cry for me baby 04 till i kissed you 05 what am i gonna do 06 once more [play](#) 07 wild about my lovin' 08 no turning back 09 end of the world 10 y'hoo 11 don't do me no wrong 12 forever you and me 13 bring my cadillac back 14 lovey dovey lovely one 15 let us sing

Drums – Steve Rushton Guitar, Bass – Darrel Higham Percussion – Snowboy Piano – James Compton Saxophone – Al Nicholls Trumpet – Dave Priseman

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Imelda May is a unique vocal talent, one whose gift lies outside the normal order of pop culture time and trends. Inspired by the sounds of vocal jazz à la Billie Holiday and the sound and looks of rockabilly, May began performing with the swing outfit Blue Harlem, and released a handful of independent CDs before scoring attention in 2007 with her nomination for an award as Best Burlesque Singer as well as the release of her more official debut, Love Tattoo. The album, featuring her strong backing band comprised of players Dave Priseman, Darrell Higham, Al Gare, and Steve Rushton, was critically and commercially well received, leading to some high-profile live gigs, including hitting the road with Jools Holland. It was released in the U.S.A. by Decca in 2009, followed by two singles, and scored a mid-level success. Her sophomore effort, Mayhem, arrived in September of 2010, preceded by the single "Psycho." --- Chris True, allmusic.com

Originally released under her maiden name of Clabby in 2003, rockabilly revivalist Imelda May's debut album, No Turning Back, was re-recorded two years later when the Dubliner had the money to improve on its bedroom studio quality. Whatever the sound problems were, they appear to have been ironed out on a foot-stomping first offering which effortlessly evokes the '50s jukebox joint era thanks to its swinging rhythms, honky tonk piano hooks, and bluesy guitar

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riffs, not to mention May's versatile vocals, which sit somewhere between the pure jazz delivery of Billie Holiday and the raw, earthy tones of Janis Joplin. The old-fashioned rock & roll of "Dealing with the Devil," the infectious boogie rock of "Flame of Love," and the twanging surf pop of "Wild About My Lovin'" all sound like the kind of feel-good tunes the Fonz would bop along to on Happy Days, while "Till I Kissed You" (a duet with Elvis soundalike and guitarist/husband Darrell Higham), would make even the sternest of teddy boys swoon. But perhaps hinting at the more eclectic direction her later output was to take, the album's retro influences occasionally extend beyond the vintage rock & roll of Eddie Cochran and Buddy Holly, as on the smoky jazz-tinged torch song "Once More," the Nina Simone-esque gospel blues of "What Am I Gonna Do?," and the gorgeous Nashville-inspired rendition of Skeeter Davis' "End of the World." The amount of covers (Cliff Richard's "No Turning Back," Baker Knight's "Bring My Cadillac Back," Junior Wells' "Lovey Dovey Lovely One"), suggest she didn't quite have the confidence in the songwriting abilities she would later pursue on Love Tattoo and Mayhem. But No Turning Back is still a consistently strong romp through the sounds of the '50s, which undoubtedly helped sow the seeds for her future mainstream success. --- Jon O'Brien, allmusic.com

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