

Imelda May – Love Tattoo (2008)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 21 February 2012 09:38 - Last Updated Tuesday, 17 April 2018 21:16

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01. Imelda May - Johnny Got A Boom Boom (3:01) 02. Imelda May - Feel Me (3:00) 03. Imelda May - Knock 123 (5:30) 04. Imelda May - Wild About My Lovin' (3:17) 05. Imelda May - Big Bad Handsome Man (2:46) [play](#) 06. Imelda May - Love Tattoo (2:58) 07. Imelda May - Meet You At The Moon (2:49) 08. Imelda May - Smoker's Song (2:39)

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09. Imelda May - Smotherin' Me (2:45) 10. Imelda May - Fallin' In Love With You Again (4:09) 11. Imelda May - It's Your Voodoo Workin' (3:14) 12. Imelda May - Watcha Gonna Do (3:42)
Double Bass, Bass Guitar – Al Gare Drums – Dean Beresford Guitar – Darrel Higham Piano, Organ [Hammond] – Danny McCormack Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Percussion – Dave Priseman Vocals, Bodhrán, Producer – Imelda May

Love Tattoo is the debut solo album by Irish vocalist Imelda May, formerly of the roots outfit Blue Harlem. Originally released by the indie Foottapping imprint, it was later licensed in the U.K. by Ambassador and in the United States by Verve Forecast. May has captured the attention of the United Kingdom with its release, and for good reason. It's a striking gumbo of tough boogie-woogie, streetwise razor-edged rockabilly, intimate sultry vocal jazz, and sassy jump blues. May wrote all but two of the set's 12 tracks and produced the set; she also plays the bodhran, an Irish percussion instrument from antiquity. She's surrounded herself with an ace band that includes her husband, guitarist Darrell Higham, trumpeter Dave Priseman (who also plays flügelhorn and percussion), pianist and organist Danny McCormack, bassist Al Gare, and drummer Dean Beresford. The kickoff is the stomping rockabilly of "Johnny Got a Boom Boom" (infer what you might from the title). With a slapping double bassline intro, the drum kit latches on and takes it for another eight measures before Higham's nasty guitar begins its cutting strut. But May's vocal tops it all and swaggers confidently with its expression of raw sensuality. This is a love song from the streets, but it isn't trashy. It's got its own kind of in-your-face class. Contrast this with the gorgeous bluesy ballad "Knock 123," with its slow walking piano and basslines and a halting guitar figure, and May's voice all croon and caress. The title track is a wild stomp and roll where blues, rock & roll, country, and boogie collide behind her blues shout. May is a trained vocalist to be sure, but when the material calls for it, her voice contains a certain rough grain -- earthy, raw, and full of unbridled passion. It's even evident in the country

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ballad "Falling in Love with You Again" (one of the tracks where her bodhran can be heard prominently). The lilt, grace, and haggard elegance of her voice reveal an entire well of feeling that seems to bubble up effortlessly yet without artifice. The entire album is deliciously and unabashedly retro, but comes off as spontaneous, fresh, and full of adventure. The uptempo tunes are simply unhinged, while the ballads are full of authentic emotion. The tunes aren't overly arranged, the production is minimal, and the instruments -- as well as her voice -- sound unembellished. Imelda May is capturing the attention of Europe for a reason; she is a rare and very exciting talent who understands the history of American roots music and knows how to use that understanding in a contemporary context without pandering. Love Tattoo is righteous. Period. ---Thom Jurek, AMG

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