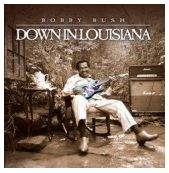
Bobby Rush - Down In Louisiana (2013)



1. Down in Louisiana 2. You Just Like a Dresser 3. I Ain't the One 4. Tight Money 5. Don't You Cry 6. Boogie in the Dark 7. Raining in my Heart 8. Rock This House 9. What is the Blues 10. Bowlegged Woman 11. Swing Low Musicians: Bobby Rush – guitar, harmonica, vocals Lou Rodriguez – guitar Paul Brown - Fender Rhodes, Hammond B3, piano, vocals, Wurlitzer Terry Richardson – bass Pete Mendillo – drums, percussion

A chittlin' circuit trailblazer, unlike contemporaries like Bobby Bland, Latimore, Little Milton and Johnnie Taylor, Bobby Rush's career has thrived for more than five decades without the aid of a bona fide hit—well, "Chicken Heads" charted briefly in 1970. Rush has managed this via his energetic and "colorful" shows as well as a steady string of solid, down-home R&B releases. On Down in Louisiana, Rush has outdone himself. The opening/title track here is brilliant. Complete with an accordion, it's a stew of blues, funk and zydeco that really cooks.

This track should get plenty of radio attention in Southwest Louisiana. It's followed by "Just Like a Dresser," which tackles a common blues theme, as does "I Ain't the One," with Rush dispensing some frank advice to his ex. He also plays an attractive harmonica solo over a catchy ska-like arrangement. "Tight Money" not only addresses a timely theme and Rush's—again he plays a timely solo and interjects some Howlin' Wolf moans. The rousing shuffle "Boogie in the Dark" draws on two impressive Chicago influences—Jimmy Reed and Magic Sam—aka blues gods. Other standout tracks include "Raining in My Heart" (not the Slim Harpo song), which oddly reminds one of Ann Peebles' 1970s material. So too is the humorous reprise of "Bowlegged Woman," a song long a part of Rush's repertoire. Down in Louisiana ends with a rather haunting, nontraditional version of "Swing Low" that somehow works. There's not a stinker in the bunch here. This is a five-star release and what contemporary blues is all about. --- Jeff Hannusch, offbeat.com

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