

INTERPRETATIONS: THE BRITISH ROCK SONGBOOK

The New York Times

“Ms. LaVette, 64, now rivals Aretha Franklin as her generation’s most vital soul singer. She uses every scrape, shout and break in her raspy voice, with a predator’s sense of timing, to seize the drama of a song.”

Entertainment WEEKLY

“Bettye LaVette has exquisite taste in songs and the gravelly delivery to wring every bit of meaning from their lyrics. The combination is superlative here.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“The marriage of singer and song is perfect.”



“LaVette...digs deep to mine the grit and melancholy that a lot of these songs, as great as they are, didn’t know they had.”



“Required listening for music lovers of all nationalities and sensibilities.”

Rolling Stone

“LaVette brings simmering blues to Pink Floyd (‘Wish You Were Here’), the Moody Blues (‘Nights in White Satin’), the Who (‘Love Reign O’er Me’), the Stones (‘Salt of the Earth’) and especially Elton John, whose diva ownership of ‘Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me’ is forever challenged.”

Los Angeles Times

“She transforms the familiar by dialing back from the sometimes grandiose originals, reconceived as something far more raw and personal.”



“Sometimes it takes a long time for the spotlight to find you. Just ask R&B singer Bettye LaVette, who waited almost 40 years for her turn – but boy is she making up for lost time now.”

jambands.com

“Talk about interpretations: LaVette has a knack for taking hold of a tune, wrapping herself up in it, and simply *becoming* the damn thing... By the time you’ve made one pass through Interpretations, however, Bettye LaVette has you believing that these tunes were written for her to begin with. And maybe they were.”

THE ROSEBUD AGENCY

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Bettye LaVette

2011 GRAMMY Nominee for Best Contemporary Blues Album
Also Grammy nominated in 2008 for her *The Scene of The Crime* CD

Interpretations - The British Rock Songbook

Bettye's latest CD features songs composed by **The Beatles, Rolling Stones, The Who, Eric Clapton, Led Zeppelin** and **Pink Floyd** among others.

2012 Blues Music Awards Nominee for Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year (an award she previously won in 2008 and was nominated for in 2010 as well). Also Bettye was a 2004 winner for Comeback Blues Album of the Year for her CD, **A Woman Like Me**.

2011 Living Blues Awards Nominee for Blues Artist of the Year (Female)

Featured on Amnesty International's Bob Dylan Tribute – Chimes of Freedom: The Songs of Bob Dylan Honoring 50 Years of Amnesty International. She sings on "Most of the Time" (previously unreleased)

Featuring on **John Lennon Tribute** album *The 30th Annual John Lennon Tribute, Live From the Beacon Theatre NYC* to benefit Red Cross' tsunami relief efforts, released November 15, 2011

2011 saw Bettye recognized in the **DownBeat Critics Poll** in both the Blues Artist category and Beyond Artist category. Also named in Top 10 Blues Artists of the Year in 2009

2011 **DownBeat** magazine **Readers Poll** - ranked among the Best Blues Artists (second year in a row) and Best Beyond Albums for her album *Interpretations - The British Rock Songbook*

2011 **B. B. King International Artist of the Year Award** Nominee in The Toronto Blues Society's 15th Maple Blues Awards program. Bettye's third nomination for the award (previously 2006 & 2007).

"The showstopper was... Bettye LaVette, reveling in her first chance to perform her 1965 hit (on the Calla label), "Let Me Down Easy," with a live orchestra. In rasping, wrenching, moaning phrases, she was pure triumphant desolation, drawing a standing ovation." - **Jon Pareles, New York Times**, June 15, 2011, Review: Motown Meets NYC with the New York Pops orchestra

Appearances on **NBC's Today Show, Late Night with David Letterman, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson, Austin City Limits, Good Morning America, Tavis Smiley** and **Lopez Tonight**.

Bettye was chosen to support **Robert Plant** on select dates of his 2010 US Summer Tour. *"It would have been nice to see Plant try to keep up with 64-year-old opener Bettye LaVette, the soul survivor who turned George Harrison's Isn't It a Pity and the Who's Love, Reign O'er Me into pained, personal rafter rattlers. If folks didn't know LaVette before this night, they sure do now. She was small but mighty, making the show unforgettable before the hirsute headliner even took the stage."* - **St. Petersburg Times**

Bettye returned to Carnegie Hall in February 2011 as a featured performer at the tribute event, **The Music of Neil Young at Carnegie Hall**. This was her third performance at the legendary hall, having previously been featured in benefits including tributes to **Joni Mitchell** (2006) and **The Who** (2010).

Honored with **Heroes And Legends (HAL) Achievement in Music Award** (September 2010)

Featured guest on **Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor** in February 2010. Bettye performed live from the Fox Theatre in Detroit along with Soul Legend **"Sir" Mack Rice** and **Jearlyn and Jevetta Steele**.

Featured on **Live From The Artists Den** episode broadcast on PBS, August 19, 2010, backed by **The Drive-By Truckers** (who played on Bettye's GRAMMY Nominated album, *The Scene of the Crime*).

On **CNN.com**, **Peter Grumbine** (Current.com) praises Bettye, stating that of "living singers who are actively releasing music now, there is no one more soulful than Bettye LaVette." (July 2009)

Performance with **Paul McCartney** and **Ringo Starr** at Radio City Music Hall in New York for **David Lynch** Foundation's Transcendental Meditation Benefit, April 2009.

Performed at **The Obama Inaugural Celebration at The Lincoln Memorial** in a duet with **Jon Bon Jovi** (broadcast on HBO, January 2009).

Rhythm & Blues Foundation Pioneer Award Honoree - 2006

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"Ms. LaVette now rivals Aretha Franklin as her generation's most vital soul singer." -**The New York Times**, May 20, 2010

"LaVette's gig at the Old Town School of Folk Music was the stuff of legends while her "Interpretations" re-imagined music that we felt we knew by heart in unexpected and exciting new ways. In an age where the word "diva" is often used freely, LaVette makes Aretha, Patti, Gladys, Chaka and, yes, even Tina sound lightweight." - **Windy City Times**, January 5, 2011

Featured in **The New Yorker** (January 15, 2011) regarding her standout performance of "Love Reign O'er Me," honoring **The Who at Kennedy Center Honors**: *"Standing in a circle of light, LaVette began in a confiding tone, and ended in a raspy, full-throated cry. The gestures she made – rolling her hands as if to gather momentum, letting her shoulders go slack in submission, slapping her hip as if to urge herself on, and raising her hands above her head to plead – were arresting, and her performance seemed startlingly authentic. Throughout, Daltrey and Townshend, and Streisand, seated beside them, nodded and shook their heads, as if listening to a galvanizing preacher. When LaVette finished, Streisand turned to Townshend and said, "Fantastic!" Later, she asked if he had really written the song."*

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ANTI- RECORDS

Bettye LaVette brings the British Invasion home to its American R&B roots on her latest CD, *Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook*. While Bettye's Grammy-nominated 2007 disc *The Scene Of The Crime* went to the source to find triumph over her own anguish, *Interpretations* looks to the past this time for inspiration and uncovers common ancestry in seemingly divergent musical paths.

Produced by Bettye, **Rob Mathes** and **Michael Stevens**, the album is a 13-song journey through compositions by **the Beatles**, **Rolling Stones**, **Led Zeppelin** and **Pink Floyd** among others, before concluding right where the very idea for *Interpretations* started: Bettye's visceral show-stopping rendition of The Who's "Love Reign O'er Me" from the 2008 Kennedy Center Honors, which appears here as a bonus track.

That performance - which first brought Bettye together with Stevens (the event's producer) and Mathes (its musical director) - served notice that Bettye is no mere singer. As an extraordinary interpreter of song, she doesn't merely mold a piece of music to suit her tastes; she is a conjurer of deep, emotional truths.

"Bettye LaVette punched a hole right through her version of Pete Townshend's 'Love Reign O'er Me,' letting all the song's emotion pour out in a way that its creators never conceived," observed the New York Daily News. **Townshend** himself came up to Bettye after her performance, took her hands into his and said, "You made me weep."

Throughout *Interpretations*, her performances are a revelation not just of raw emotion, but of the inexorable ties between British rock 'n' roll and the American blues and R&B, which when combined, catalyzed popular music. That **Lennon**, **McCartney**, and so many others who crossed the Atlantic in their wake, were deeply influenced by American music is no great secret. What Bettye demonstrates here so convincingly is the degree to which rock 'n' roll and American soul remain bound by bloodlines.

The Beatles' pre-psychedelic **Rubber Soul** classic "The Word" takes on an almost religious fervor, while Paul McCartney's "Maybe I'm Amazed" is transformed from a majestic pop song into a stark, almost desperate expression of devotion. Profound alienation becomes intense longing on Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here," and the wistful naïvé of **The Moody Blues'** "Nights in White Satin" matures into a deep and unshakeable lament. Bettye inhabits these songs, revitalizes them and exposes the humanity that makes these 13 tracks not just pop songs, but enduring works of art.



Bettye Lavette has always been a wonderful singer – I have been a huge fan for many years. To my delight and surprise she recorded an amazing version of "Talking Old Soldiers" – a song which nobody else has covered, and made it her own. Now she has recorded "Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me" and has done exactly the same...I am truly touched by her picking these songs and can only hope that this album brings more attention to this incredible artist.

Elton John

When you hear a voice like Bettye LaVette's there's a sense of transportation...a certain freedom of movement and emotion, which is rare. Especially to me and I suspect other Englishmen who were so fascinated by the music that is so natural to Bettye while we were still getting our feet wet. A great record. Put me in the fan club! How did Bettye LaVette slip thru the net for so long?

Keith Richards

Somehow she got lost in the tail end of the soul era – perhaps she was just too ferocious for mass white taste – but she certainly is and was the greatest female soul singer, in a hardcore vein.

Ry Cooder

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Discography

Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook (May 25, 2010)

Change Is Gonna Come Sessions (2009)

Tell Me a Lie (1982 – Re-issued in 2008 by Reel Music)

The Scene of the Crime (2007) – GRAMMY Nominated

Song Of America - Various Artists (2007)

Track: Streets Of Philadelphia

What's Going On - The Dirty Dozen Brass Band (2006)

Track: What's Happening Brother

Do Your Duty (2006)

The Complete Silver Fox/SSS Recordings

Child Of The Seventies (2006)

The Complete Atlantic/Atco Recordings

Take Another Little Piece Of My Heart (2006)

The Classic Late '60s Memphis Recordings with The Dixie Flyers

Get In The Groove - Live (Various Artists) (2005)

Tracks: Night Time is the Right Time, Tailfeather Finale

Vanthology - A Tribute To Van Morrison (Various Artists) (2003)

Track: Real Real Gone

I've Got My Own Hell to Raise (2005)

A Woman Like Me (2003)

Bettye LaVette: Let Me Down Easy In Concert (2000)

Souvenirs (2000)

(Original previously unreleased Atco LP from 1973)

Bluesoul Belles The Complete Calla Recordings (1999)

The Very Best of the Motor City Recordings (1996)

Nearer to You: The SSS Recordings (1990)

Not Gonna Happen Twice (1990)

Tell Me a Lie (1982)



Appearances at: Carnegie Hall (2006 & 2010); Blues in Hell 2010 (Norway); 2010 Vancouver Folk Music Festival; 2010 Toronto Jazz Festival; 2010 Doheny Blues Festival; Congressional Blues Festival (Washington D.C.); Long Beach Blues Festival (CA); Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival (San Francisco); Montreux Jazz Festival; Chicago Blues Festival; Bridgestone Music Festival (Sao Paulo, Brazil); Lucerne Blues Festival; Great Atlantic Blues and Beyond Festival (Halifax, Nova Scotia); Oslo Jazz Festival; Blues in Chedigny (France); Fuji Rock Festival (Japan); Festival International de Jazz de Montreal; Rothbury Festival (MI); Wakarusa Festival (KS); New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival; Jazzablanca (Casablanca, Morocco); WOMAD (Spain); Women's Arts International Festival (UK); Moulin Blues (The Netherlands); Bumbershoot (Seattle, WA); Newport Folk Festival (RI); BBC Radio 2 Cambridge Folk Festival (UK); North Sea Jazz Festival; Belgium Rhythm and Blues Festival; Bonnaroo; Monterey Jazz Festival

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