



Red's Blues~~You Knock Me Out

With this second release, *You Knock Me Out*, Red's Blues has stepped up another notch into blues big league with the exemplary songwriting team of singer Beth Reid-Grigsby and her Blues Music Award-winning stand up (bass-playing and singing) husband RW Grigsby. Couple that with all their music friends joining in on the fun, and this new CD makes a very strong case for Northern California being the new torch-bearing center of the classic Chicago and Texas blues sound.

Six stellar originals tell the couple's individual and combined personal histories in an honest and cosmic way. Beth & RW's love of the classic blues vibe pays off and yet, these songs could easily be covered by well-known singers in many roots music idioms.

Nestled alongside are songs by their mid-20th century heroes Jimmy Reed (lead track, "There'll Be a Day", "Ain't That Loving You Baby"), Memphis Minnie ("Lookin' the World Over"), Big Bill Broonzy ("Lonesome Road Blues"), jump blues brother-sister act, Buddy & Ella Johnson ("Why Don't You Stop It") and Memphis Slim ("Mother Earth.")

Red's Blues has a finger-poppin' attitude—straight outta the afore-mentioned golden years when blues, R&B and swing all meshed together and dance floors every night were filled with snake hips and slow drags. Beth, with her sensual, southern voice and classy behind-the-beat phrasing is more a Julie London or Bobbie Gentry-styled singer: smoky with languid, sexy sophistication. She can swing too, just check out the big fun on "Why Don't Ya Stop It." This rich nightclub feel is missed on too many modern singers. The yearning confidentiality, the wise heart that Beth brings to her true-life stories reveal tales of youth seen through grown up reflection.

RW, who has not lost his hometown Rome, Georgia accent has this quality also. Upright bass never had a better companion—it's no wonder that RW has anchored the doghouse rhythm for Mark Hummel's legendary Harmonica Blowouts for ten years. Together, Beth & RW have a rare and beautiful combination of poetry, humor and groove in their music. What other couple in more recent music memory had this? Could they be the blues Sonny & Cher? Johnny & June? Whether up-tempo or ballad, this makes for a great live show —part juke joint, part nightclub. They are *uptown and lowdown*.

Their friends on this release are California harp masters **Rick Estrin** and **Mark Hummel**, Texas guitar masters Anson **Funderburgh** and **Mike Keller**, Texas drummer and RW Grigsby's childhood music

sidekick, **Wes Starr** (the dazzling team from Hummel's Golden State-Lone Star Revue) and two Sacramento Hall of Famers, guitarists **Robert Sidwell** and **Steve Randall**.

Veteran Bay Area Musician **Dave Earl**, now living in the Sierra foothills, has played guitar and rack harmonica in Red's Blues since 2016. Says Beth, "Multi-instrumentalist Dave Earl plays guitar, harmonica, sings and also plays a mean mandolin. When we have another guitar player on stage with us, he has a chance to really cut loose on harmonica. He's up there with the best."

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Drummer/studio owner/engineer **Larry Carr** understands the great 1950s Chicago drummers like Jimmy Reed's great shuffle drummer Earl Phillips. He also has a terrific beatnik bongo/shakers turn on one of the album highlights, "I'm Trouble (Hillbilly Bongo Blues)" penned by RW. If Robert Mitchum were still around, THIS 2-minute warning would absolutely be his theme song.

Young Hammond B-3 lions are here too. **James Pace** (Tommy Castro) and **Kid Andersen** (award-winning blues producer; and formerly with Terry Hanck, Charlie Musselwhite, now Rick Estrin & The Nightcats), and **John Cocuzzi** all take turns and elegant swingman Cocuzzi adds his deep blues piano touch on three songs.

It is always good to know what the artists themselves want to say about each song choice they carefully made and the originals they wrote:

1. ***There'll Be A Day***- the flip side of Jimmy Reed's 1963 hit "Shame, Shame, Shame." Original 3rd verse written by Beth contains the album title ***You Knock Me Out***.
2. ***Poor Girl***- inspired by RW and Beth's time managing a ghetto bingo hall in Montgomery, Alabama and a girl with a gambling problem.
3. ***Lookin' The World Over***- Memphis Minnie's tale of travels with her righteous man. Killer Estrin harp solo.
4. ***That's All***- written after Beth found a picture of her mother's. A family tale of living, loving and dying.
5. ***Ain't That Loving You Baby***- Jimmy Reed cover features Mark Hummel on harp and the Golden State Lone Star Revue.
6. ***Baby Walk On***- RW original inspired by Mose Allison. Solos by Hummel, Mike Keller and Anson Funderburgh.
7. ***Stonebroke***- originally recorded in 1992 with RW on Gary Primich's ***My Pleasure*** on Austin's Amazing Records. Rick Estrin plays some fine solos. A Primich original.
8. ***Why Don't You Stop It***- Buddy and Ella Johnson tune, Lou Ann Barton used to sing this with Roomful of Blues.
9. ***Pat's Blues***-Original tune about our friend who went on a binge and woke up with a stranger who's name she didn't know....yep it's true. Only we changed it to a tune about our friend, a guy, because it didn't sound right, Beth singing about a girl.....)

10. **Lonesome Road Blues**- Big Bill Broonzy road tune.
11. **I'm Trouble (Hillbilly Bongo Blues)**- RW original, Larry Carr on bongos, hillbilly beatnik.
12. **Somewhere Down The Line**- Another RW&B original, trying to channel the feel of south Louisiana in this song of reconciliation. Nice soloing from John Cocuzzi and Steve Randall. Another family tale.
13. **Mother Earth**- Memphis Slim cover brings it all home. Solos by John Cocuzzi and Robert Sidwell. On a Blues Cruise in 2012, Barrelhouse Chuck asked Beth if she knew "Mother Earth." She said "no, but I know **Blues is Everywhere**." He said, "I love your voice. Learn that song." So she did—"never got to sing it with him, though. I was glad RW thought of putting it on the CD."

A little more Beth & RW back story:

Beth, thanks to her older brother, grew up listening to Huddie Ledbetter, Muddy Waters and Mississippi John Hurt records and as a kid, learned from and sang songs at home with her Mom-- "Summertime," "God Bless the Child," and St. Louis Blues." Across the street in her hometown of south Santa Barbara though, the shy 7 year old redhead was bold enough to go perch on the neighbor's porch listening to a Cuban salsa band rehearse, and from that learned to love the rhythms, the bass and percussion in particular. She and RW met through the local Santa Barbara blues scene years later in 1977, and have lived in his home state of Georgia and then Texas before heading back to sunny Sacramento, California in 2006.

2014 Grammy-nominated and Blues Music Award (BMA) winner bassist RW Grigsby has been playing since he was 14 years old, and began his professional career when still a teenager. He's toured the U.S., Canada and Europe since the '80s, and currently juggles playing with Red's Blues, Mark Hummel and the Blues Survivors and The Golden State/Lone Star Blues Revue. He played and recorded with Texas blues stars Gary Primich and Black Top Records' Mike Morgan and the Crawl in the 1990s. RW is the bassist on the 2014 Grammy-nominated and BMA-winning CD, **Remembering Little Walter**. He was nominated for a BMA "Best Bassist" Award in 2017.

Red's Blues draw their audiences into a grown-up music world—southern music with downhome simmer, dance floor fun and stellar, sophisticated players who know they have no need to blast at earsplitting volumes to make the biggest impact.

– Bio by Mindy Giles, © 2017