

Album of the Month for January 2008

The Gospel Of The Blues

'Sister' Rosetta Tharpe

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Believe me, this is a great CD by one of the Queens of Blues. So-called '**Sister**' as this was how **Rosetta** was billed when, with her mother and aged just 6, they started touring the gospel circuit. From her humble beginnings in Arkansas, she became an international recording star on the Decca label, sang many times at the famed Apollo Theatre in Harlem, hosted her own syndicated gospel music TV show in the 60s and appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival.

What made **Rosetta** different from other gospel singers was her unique mixture of spiritual lyrics with a rock accompaniment. She also played in nightclubs with big bands backing her.

This CD has everything, stripped down bare tracks with just her piercing voice and guitar playing, then some swing, a little bit of jive and great fun:

Track 5 *Shout Sister Shout!* is her signature tune and is a great celebratory song

Track 8 *I Want A Tall Skinny Papa* is loud, silly and captures her spirit

Track 9 packs a powerful message about the dangers of drink and that *God Don't Like It*

Forget the religious messages and just listen to the simplicity of the lyrics, the somewhat naive guitar playing and remember that blues and jazz formed the music that we listen to now and if there is a more joyous and somewhat raucous way to enjoy the fever that is gospel music, you'll have to go a long way to find it after listening to '**Sister**' **Rosetta**.

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