Lulu and the Broadsides Self Titled Record, For Release 2022

New Orleans music is for dancing. From King Oliver’s hot jazz to Big Freedia’s frantic bounce, whether the sounds are made for quick-stepping in a parade or swaying slow in your sweetheart’s arms, the common thread running through nearly all of it is that it’s made to move to: wiggle, shimmy, shake your hip and let your backbone slip.

For more than two decades, over the course of a career that took her around the world and back again, singer-songwriter Dayna Kurtz circled back to New Orleans constantly, building a musical community and a fan base until finally, in 2013 she was able to put down roots in the city and make it her home base. And what blossomed from those roots is one of New Orleans – and maybe the world’s – best-kept secrets. (“There’s no logical reason why singer-songwriter Dayna Kurtz is not a full-blown star,” wrote the Boston Globe.) For decades, to those in the know, she’s been admired as a writer’s writer and a singer’s singer, and with the Broadsides she’s backed by what can only be called a supergroup of New Orleans aces – James Singleton on bass, (James Booker, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, Astral Project) Carlo Nuccio on drums, (Dr. John, Tori Amos) Glenn Hartman (New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars) on keys and Robert Maché (Continental Drifters, Steve Wynn) on guitar.

Dayna’s already carved out a name for herself with a side interest of collecting a repertoire of obscure soul and R&B gems, as well as originals that could have been unearthed from the same record hound’s favorite crypt, all caressed with the rich, rough and smoky vocals a reviewer once described as positively addictive. Her eclectic choices and compositions, mining rock and roll, blues and R&B– have more often than not shone the light on her talent for the low, slow burn, with trademark deep-pitched and honeyed vocals that smolder. Lulu and the Broadsides is where she decides to sizzle, slinging made-for-dancing sets of vintage rhythm and blues with the emphasis on rhythm. Formed in part to respond to demand from New Orleans’ hip, thriving underground dance scene, the band has already been invited to slots at both the French Quarter Festival and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, plus club residencies that dependably pack the dance floor.

With a wide-mouthed, window-rattling sound that stacks up solidly alongside the great blues shouters – Big Maybelle, Big Mama Thornton – Lulu and the Broadsides double-dog dare you not to get out there and move what the good Lord gave you. There’s the whomping “Pretty Good Love,” their scorching, primal take on Iggy Pop’s “I Need Somebody,“ the noirish strut of “You’re Trouble” and Dayna’s tender, aching sounds-like-a-classic soul-ballad “How Do I Stop.”

This is heart-thumping, pulse-pounding blues for both body and spirit, for joy and desire - scorching ballads for slow grinds side-by-side with red-hot movers to jump and jive to, with a nasty beat and a wild guitar. You’ll sweat through your dress, kick off your heels and get back on the dance floor barefoot.

 -Alison Fensterstock