



MARCIA BALL

Marcia Ball's rollicking roadhouse rave-ups and soulful Gulf Coast R&B, her barrelhouse playing and her feel-good party tunes are iconic.

---USA Today

A joyful musical tour of the territory between New Orleans and Austin. Ball's voice can break your heart with a ballad or break your back with a rocker.

---Boston Herald

The title track of **Marcia Ball's** new album, *The Tattooed Lady And The Alligator Man*, is an irresistible tale of true love at the travelling carnival. It's a story that nobody but Ball could spin, filled with vivid details, universal truths, and a rambunctious sense of fun and desire. With raucous horns punctuating Ball's legendary piano pounding and emotional, melodic vocals, the song kicks off the CD of eleven originals and one glorious cover (Hank Ballard's *He's The One*). The release mixes Ball's Gulf Coast blues, New Orleans R&B, swampy Louisiana ballads, and jumping, Tex---Mex flavored zydeco into a one---of---a---kind musical gumbo, a sound she has been perfecting over the course of her legendary career.

The Texas---born, Louisiana---raised musical storyteller has earned worldwide fame for her ability to ignite a full---scale roadhouse rhythm and blues party every time she strolls onto the stage. Her groove---laden New Orleans boogie, deeply soulful ballads and rollicking Gulf Coast blues have made her a one---of---a---kind favorite with music fans all over the world. In 2010, she was inducted into the Gulf Coast Hall Of Fame and in 2012 into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. She's received a total of six *Living Blues* Awards and nine Blues Music Awards (and has a whopping 42 nominations). She's received five Grammy Award nominations, including five of her six previous Alligator albums. Always a songwriter of renown, Ball delved deeper into songwriting than she ever had in her career with her Grammy---nominated 2010 Alligator release, *Roadside Attractions*, creating one of her best and most personal albums.

On *The Tattooed Lady And The Alligator Man*, Ball continues that trajectory, drawing her listeners deep into her music with instantly memorable melodies and imaginative imagery. Her songs paint vibrant musical pictures richly detailed with characters, flavors and scenes straight out of Louisiana, Texas and the Gulf Coast. From the poignant *Just Keep Holding On* to the fresh start of *Clean My*

House to the surprising and timely *The Squeeze Is On* to the southern warmth of *Human Kindness*, Ball has delivered a set of songs so well written and so well performed, she'll astound and delight her longtime fans and give newcomers plenty of reasons to join the party. Featuring her stellar, road---tested road band, with help from friends Delbert McClinton and Terrance Simien and production by Grammy---winner Tom Hambridge (Buddy Guy, Joe Louis Walker, James Cotton, Susan Tedeschi), *The Tattooed Lady And The Alligator Man* is happy, moving, joyful, stirring, thought--- provoking, danceable and fun.

After a solo LP for Capitol and a successful series of releases on Rounder, Ball joined the Alligator Records family in 2001 with the release of the critically acclaimed *Presumed Innocent*. The CD took home the 2002 Blues Music Award for Blues Album Of The Year. 2004's *So Many Rivers*, 2005's *Live! Down The Road*, 2008's *Peace, Love & BBQ* and 2010's *Roadside Attractions* all received Grammy Award nominations as well as critical and popular acclaim.

Born in Orange, Texas in 1949 to a family whose female members all played piano, Ball grew up in the small town of Vinton, Louisiana, right across the border from Texas. She began taking piano lessons at age five, playing old Tin Pan Alley tunes from her grandmother's collection. From her aunt, Marcia heard more modern and popular music. But it wasn't until she was 13 that Marcia discovered the power of soul music. One day in 1962, she sat amazed while Irma Thomas delivered the most spirited performance the young teenager had ever seen. According to Ball, "She just blew me away; she caught me totally unaware. Once I started my own band, the first stuff I was doing was Irma's." In 1966, she attended Louisiana State University, where she played some of her very first gigs with a blues---based rock band called Gum.

In 1970, Ball set out for San Francisco. Her car broke down in Austin, and while waiting for repairs she fell in love with the city and decided to stay. It wasn't long before she was performing in the city's clubs with a progressive country band called Freda And The Firedogs, while beginning to hone her songwriting skills. It was around this time that she delved deeply into the music of the great New Orleans piano players, especially Professor Longhair. "Once I found out about Professor Longhair," recalls Ball, "I knew I had found my direction."

When the band broke up in 1974, Marcia launched her solo career, signing to Capitol Records and debuting with the country---rock album *Circuit Queen* in 1978. Discovering and honing her own sound, she released six critically acclaimed titles on the Rounder label during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1990, Ball—collaborating with Angela Strehli and Lou Ann Barton—recorded the hugely successful *Dreams Come True* on the Antone's label. At the end of 1997, Marcia finished work on a similar "three divas of the blues" project for Rounder, this time in the distinguished company of Tracy Nelson and her longtime inspiration, Irma

Thomas. The CD *Sing It!* was released in 1998 and was nominated for a Grammy Award. In 1999, Marcia and her band appeared in the nationally televised Public Television special *In Performance At The White House* along with B.B. King and Della Reese. Marcia has been featured on leading television and radio programs, including *Austin City Limits* and NPR's *Fresh Air* and *Piano Jazz*. She performed in *Piano Blues*, the film directed by Clint Eastwood included in Martin Scorsese's *The Blues* series which aired on PBS television nationwide in 2003. Marcia has also appeared *The Late Show With David Letterman* with The New Orleans Social Club, where she not only reached millions of people, she helped to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina. In 2012, she had a role in the independent film *Angels Sing* starring Harry Connick, Jr., Lyle Lovett and Willie Nelson.

Ball has been the subject of stories in many national publications, including *USA Today*, *Keyboard*, *DownBeat*, *Billboard*, and in newspapers from coast to coast. She has twice performed on *A Prairie Home Companion*, appeared on *World Cafe* and *Whad'Ya Know?*, Public Radio International's *Studio 360*, as well as on XM/Sirius satellite radio. Ball has been featured on the covers of *The Austin Chronicle* as well as *Blues Revue* magazine, as well as in countless lead stories in entertainment sections of publications around the country.

The *New York Times* says, "Marcia Ball plays two---fisted New Orleans barrelhouse piano and sings in a husky, knowing voice about all the trouble men and women can get into on the way to a good time." *Living Blues* declares, "Her originals sound like timeless classics and southern soul masterpieces that else can imitate." Of the new album, Ball says, "I don't make a record until I no one have to have something to say, stories to tell, messages to impart. I try to make records that are true to me," she continues, "and this one couldn't be truer." On *The Tattooed Lady And The Alligator Man*, the message is loud and clear: Marcia Ball has plenty of surprising and thought---provoking stories to tell, and the two---fisted piano prowess, sweet and soulful vocals and superlative songs with which to tell them.