

ReViEws

Paula and the Pontiacs

Cadillac Love

(Pontiac Productions)

The old adage says good things come to those who wait. For fans of classic New Orleans rhythm and blues, the release of multitalented songstress Paula Rangell's *Cadillac Love* makes that proverb ring true. Over a decade of bar gigs and street corner serenades in the making, *Cadillac Love* is a lovingly produced showcase for Rangell's saxophone, harmonica and vocal abilities, and reveals her previously hidden greatest gift: songwriting.

The inviting title track is a clever paean to her band name, as Paula patiently croons to an admirer who's wrongly running with a rival female Cadillac owner, but by the last verse it's apparent he'll be riding next to Paula in the front seat. Her longtime friend John Mooney contributes a plucky barbed wire slide solo, propelled by the telepathic rhythm section of Bluesiana bassist David Watson and the incomparable drumming of Johnny Vidacovich, "Where Care Forgot" is an absolute stunner, a beautiful homage to the Crescent City that Paula details with a poet's eye: "people on the front stoop singing," little girls with "ribbons in their hair," on "another block in the city of soul;" her inspired horn arrangement and spunky sax solo over the second line bring the portrait vividly to life.

Other highlights include a duet with Mooney on the slow lament "Gotcha On My Mind," the wailing harmonica-driven workout "Coffee Blues" (with a lusty "grinding" double entendre, and a gritty take on "Good Rockin' Daddy." Other covers such as "Blues With A Feeling" and "Down Home Boy" work just fine, but Rangell's original material is so strong it leaves you hankering for more. The album closes with Rangell's wistful and tender proclamation that she is "The Saddest Girl in Town," but Paula should take heart: *Cadillac Love* is going to put a smile on many a blues and R&B lovers' face.

— Scott Jordan, OffBeat Magazine, July, 1994