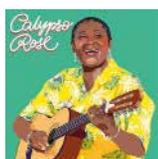


BADASS WOMEN

With International Women's Day (March 8) just around the corner and groups like GRRRL taking on the feminist cause in music (read more on p28), we celebrate some of world music's female firebrands

WORDS JO FROST & ALEXANDRA PETROPOULOS



01 Calypso Rose
Far From Home

(Because, 2016)

The queen of Trinidadian calypso might be in her 70s but she sounds as feisty as ever on this joyful album, which won Calypso Rose the Americas accolade in last year's *Songlines Music Awards*. Her rise to fame was remarkable, given the highly macho world of calypso (see our *Beginner's Guide* in #119). 'I've been breaking down walls ever since I was small,' she sings on 'Calypso Queen'. Long may she reign. A Top of the World in #120. *JF*



02 Eliza Carthy & the Wayward Band
Big Machine

(Topic Records, 2017)

The clue is in her band name – wayward. Never one to tow the traditional folk line, Carthy has been a constant on the English folk scene since getting nominated for a Mercury Music prize in 1998 – and she's still only in her early 40s. This album is a joyously brash, big, bold affair with Carthy sounding better than ever. A Top of the World in #125. *JF*



04 Julie Fowlis
Alterum

(Machair Records, 2017)

There have been many champions of Gaelic music but no one has achieved quite the level of success of thrusting it into the limelight as Julie Fowlis has. Her sublimely crystalline voice has won her fans across the world and she has always unequivocally only recorded in Gaelic – until this album where she sings in English and Galician. Reviewed in #133. *JF*



03 Rhiannon Giddens
Freedom Highway

(Nonesuch, 2017)

For her music Giddens digs

into America's history and tells stories that aren't always easy to listen to. On *Freedom Highway* she tackles racial discord, from a heartwrenching song inspired by a 1797 advert selling a slave woman while her child was 'at the purchaser's option' to covers of songs associated with the Civil Rights Movement. Powerful stuff. A Top of the World in #126. *AP*



05 Angélique Kidjo
Spirit Rising

(Wrasse Records, 2012)

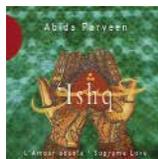
The Beninese singer is an unstoppable force onstage; no audience can resist more than one song before getting on their feet and dancing. But Kidjo perhaps earns her place on this list more for the work she does off stage. A well-known activist and Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF, she also co-founded the Batonga Foundation for girls' education. Reviewed in #85. *AP*



06 Miriam Makeba
South Africa's Skylark: Classics & Rarities

(Nascente, 2010)

It's close to ten years since the death of 'Mama Africa' but her influence on younger African singers is still huge. UN Goodwill Ambassador, civil rights activist and prominent anti-apartheid campaigner, Makeba was one of the first African artists to get recognition in the West. This CD includes many of her well-known classics such as 'The Click Song' and 'Pata Pata' and 'Soweto Blues,' written by her erstwhile husband, Hugh Masekela. *JF*



07 Abida Parveen
Ishq: Supreme Love

(Accords Croisés, 2005)

Abida Parveen is Pakistan's only internationally famous female Sufi singer. As a child, Parveen was trained by her father, the classical vocalist Ghulam Haider, who recognised the talent he heard in her and named her as his successor

– bypassing his sons – when she was just five years old. Reviewed in #31. *AP*



08 Esmá Redžepova
Queen of the Gypsies

(World Connection, 2001)

Over her lifetime the late Macedonian singer recorded an unprecedented number of songs and performed over 8,000 concerts, but the 'Queen of the Gypsies' was also a noted activist for Roma communities. Twice nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for her work helping Roma refugees flee ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, she also supported children's charities and fostered 47 Roma boys. *AP*



09 Oumou Sangaré
Mogoya

(No Format!, 2017)

Good things come to those who wait – certainly the case for the Malian leading lady of song, Oumou Sangaré. There was a gap of eight years in between *Seya* and this album. The break and the change of label seem to have worked wonders as Sangaré sounds on formidable form and is clearly relishing her return to prominence. A Top of the World in #128. *JF*



10 Tanya Tagaq
Retribution

(Six Shooter Records, 2016)

Perhaps no one deserves a spot on this list more than the Polaris Music Prize-winning Inuit throat singer. Tagaq is known for being unforgiving in her activism for Canada's indigenous peoples. *Retribution* tackles the theme of exploitation – of indigenous women in particular. The title-track warns, 'Our mother grows angry, retribution will be swift.' A Top of the World in #124. *AP*

+ LET US KNOW Have more suggestions? Get in touch, letters@songlines.co.uk