



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Blues Reimagined: Bex Marshall Live ? A Soul-Soaked

Vienna Blues Spring, 08.06.2025 [ENA]

When Bex Marshall takes the stage, the air changes. The strings tighten, the lights dim just so, and suddenly you're not just at a concert—you're on a journey through the soul of blues, rock, and roots, fused with raw emotion and virtuosic guitar work. This recent performance confirmed what fans and critics have known for years: Bex Marshall is one of the most dynamic and authentic voices in contemporary blues.

A winner of the UK British Blues Award and four-time nominee of the European Blues Awards, Marshall brought all her accolades to life on stage—and then some. With a guitar style as unmistakable as her voice, she delivered a concert that was less about recreating blues traditions and more about redefining them for a new generation. Her technique is a thrilling hybrid: bottleneck slide sears across steel strings; ragtime precision dances through fingerpicked sections; roots picking and blues rock surge with volcanic energy. It's both reverent and rebellious—exactly as modern blues should be.

Marshall's guitar playing alone is worth the price of admission. She doesn't just accompany her songs; she narrates them through her instrument. Each riff, bend, and solo feels intentional and intimate. One moment she's conjuring the Delta; the next, she's channelling the full-bodied growl of a Marshall stack from 1970s London. Her phrasing—often unpredictable, always tasteful—is the work of someone not just performing, but conversing with her guitar. In a world full of shredders and showboats, Marshall reminds us that tone, touch, and timing still matter most.

But it's her voice that makes the performance truly transcendent. Described as “a powerful melting pot of the heartbreak of an old Black woman and the soul of a rock diva,” her vocals occupy that rare and sacred space between grit and grace. On slow burners, her voice cracks with the weight of lived experience; on uptempo numbers, it rides over the groove like a flame licking the edge of gasoline. At times, it evokes the earthy ache of Bessie Smith; at others, the unapologetic swagger of Janis Joplin. But make no mistake—Marshall doesn't imitate. She invokes.

The setlist offered a sweeping panorama of emotion and narrative. Her original songs—ranging from gritty confessionals to swaggering stompers—are miniatures of lived-in storytelling. In each, she weaves tales of longing, defiance, regret, and redemption. Songs like "House of Mercy" and "Gone Fishin'" unfolded with cinematic detail, underpinned by grooves that never let up and lyrics that cut to the bone. This is the kind of songwriting that doesn't just entertain—it testifies.

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And that's perhaps Marshall's greatest gift: she brings a preacher's fire to the blues without ever sounding didactic. There's a spiritual thread to her performance, an unspoken communion between artist and audience that transcends genre. She's not just playing to a crowd—she's playing with them, for them, through them. The chemistry in the room was electric, and when she hit the final chorus of her closing number, the audience roared in a standing ovation that didn't so much end as evolve into spontaneous celebration. Throughout the evening, Marshall proved herself not only as a musician but as a presence—effortlessly charismatic, fiercely honest, and deeply rooted in the traditions she so boldly transforms.

Her between-song banter was warm and witty, but never distracted from the deep emotional currents of her music. She was in total command of her craft, of her audience, and of the vast emotional landscape she dared to explore.

In short, Bex Marshall delivered a masterclass in blues for the 21st century. Her performance wasn't a nostalgia trip; it was a revelation. With blistering guitar, soul-deep vocals, and storytelling that hits like gospel, she reminded us why the blues endures: because artists like her keep breathing new fire into its ancient soul.

This was more than a concert. It was a moment of truth—one that every fan of real, rootsy, rebellious music should seek out whenever and wherever Bex Marshall takes the stage.

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