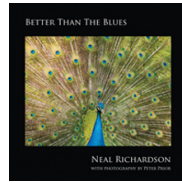


Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues



[Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues](#), the debut release by **British singer, composer, musician, producer** on the [Splash Point Records](#) label delivers the long awaited goods. Taking time from producing to lay down the 13-tracks, the album is brilliant and shows Neal Richardson's prowess as an exceptional pianist and musician, singer, composer, as well as producer.



[Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues](#) Â Â

Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues: *Better Than The Blues, This Is Not The Life, February, Nfunk, The Soul Of New Orleans, Cynthia, U.X.B., All Out Blues, Pretty As A Picture, Breathe, Delicious Circle, The Very Thought Of You, You're The Future*

Personnel: Neal Richardson - vocals, piano, organ, percussion, drums (track 7), backing vocals; **George Trebar** - double bass; **Alex Eberhard** - drums; **Andy Drudy** - guitar; **Mark White** - trumpet 1; **Sue Richardson** - trumpet 2, flugel horn, backing vocals; **Dave Lewis** - tenor sax; **Mark Bassey** - trombone; **Claire Martin OBE** - backing vocals; **Helen Sherrah-Davies** - violin; **Ricardo Herz** - violin (track 13); **David Beebee** - cello; **Fiona Hosford** - harp

Since founding Splash Point Records in 2003, Neal has produced many highly acclaimed albums including those by **Liane Carroll**, **Ian Shaw**, and **Sue Richardson**. We first met Neal as the producer of Liane Carroll's album, *Billy No Mates* released in 2003, and knowing great talent when we hear it, we were not surprised when Liane Carroll won two BBC Jazz Awards for Best Vocalist and Best of Jazz in 2005. Moving from success to success, another high mark for Neal as a producer and for Splash Point Records was when Sue Richardson's latest album, [Too Cool \(The Life and Music of Chet Baker\)](#), a tribute to Chet Baker, appeared on The Sunday Times' list of Top Ten Jazz CDs of the year.

Throughout the years, we have had the opportunity to hear Neal play live in clubs in England and on many of the albums he produced, and we have always been impressed with his talent as a gifted pianist. Whenever we would meet Neal in Europe and he would tell us about another project that he was producing, our constant refrain became, so, when is your album coming out? To which he would always reply, someday.

We are delighted that someday has finally arrived, as *Better Than The Blues* is all that we had hoped it would be and more. The release is a unique collaboration of Neal Richardson's music bound in a book of Peter Prior's fantastic photographs inspired by the compositions.

Luxury Experience has had the pleasure to review numerous releases produced by Neal Richardson, and his signature is to create a distinct flow from the beginning to the end of the release. On ***Better Than The***

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Blues, his attention to the listener is engineered brilliantly into the release as he sets his tone and carries the listener through a musical journey.Â

The release opens with the title track, *Better Than The Blues*, which is a fabulous introduction to his vision and sets the pace for this stunning release with its slow, sultry, and gritty piano intro before sliding into the lyrics, "You're a whole lot better than the blues pretty baby, You're a whole lot better than those blues, you're nothing but good news to me baby, you're nothing but good ...you're a whole lot better than the blues..." as he segues from piano to fiery organ complemented by some tangy guitar riffs and a nice guitar solo by Andy Drudy and great backing vocals by Claire Martin OBE and Sue Richardson.

Easy to relate to with world economics being what they are, is the track, *This Is Not The Life*, with its lyrics, "This is not the life ... this is not the way it was meant to be, things should have gone a little bit different, things should have been the way I wanted them to go...money, money, money, give me money." Great introductory drums solo pacing Neal's vocals that are accompanied by a tight baseline and harmonies and a great trumpet segment.Â

The track, *February* is a heartfelt lament instrumentally and lyrically featuring a poignant piano that holds the melody together and paces the track. *Nfunk* lets it all out and the band brazens their way through this funky arrangement as each member gets their chance to "show" their stuff.

All Out Blues lays it on the line with its lyrics, "...I'm taking a break now, laying it all on the line, I've got those all out blues..." Neal's vocals are smoky and they carry an edge that makes this track snappy.

Although Neal has played over 2,000 gigs in 50 countries, New Orleans has always held a very special place in his heart. *Soul Of New Orleans*, which he wrote after his first post-Katrina Mardi Gras performance, captures the flavor and the spirit of the Big Easy, as well as his love of the city and its people.

The instrumental track, *Cynthia*, is a testament to Neal's arrangement prowess as he does a duet with the drums and his piano, before the cello drops in for a few chords. Â The track *Breathe* is musically dazzling and maximizes Neal's talents as well as that of the musicians on this striking arrangement. Â

Other great tracks include the romantic *Delicious Circle* with its lyrics, "Well I've been around the world a few times ... I want you to be there, too ..." *U.X.B.* and *Pretty As A Picture*. The only song that Neal did not write on the release is the Ray Noble's standard *The Very Thought Of You*, published in 1934, and features a wonderful horn solo.

The album closes with ***You're The Future***, which has a rich samba feelÂ that will have you singing along with theÂ acapella ending. The wait was definitely worth it; Neal Richardson delivers the goods musically with his album, ***Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues***.Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â

Websites where you can procure ***Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues*** are [Splash Point Music](#), [Amazon](#), and [iTunes](#).

Listen to a sampling of ***Neal Richardson - Better Than The Blues*** at [Splash Point Music](#).

For information on **upcoming gigs**, please visit: www.NealRichardson.com

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