



# DEBRA POWER

*Barrelhouse Maven of the Blues*

## **I'M NOT FROM CHICAGO**

**Debra Power (independent) \*\*\*\***

**John Alexander Kereiff aka John the Rock Doctor**

This is the Calgary-based singer/ keyboard player's 3rd album. I'm Not From Chicago is some hard swingin' good time piano based blues destined to show all who listen a good time, with ballads like What Color Is Love that will make you want to get closer together. Power brings a lifetime of varied musical experience to what she does today.

She was weaned on Big Band music as a child, her father a bandleader during the dance era. After studying music at Memorial University majoring in voice, she then played in R&B and rock bands in Eastern Canada before moving out west, where playing in country bands sharpened her skills further. Now calling Calgary home, Debra is a vital fixture on that city's explosive blues scene and also a regular performer at the Calgary and Edmonton blues festivals come summertime.

Debra has a great voice when she's going balls out on a rocker like Hardwired For The Blues, and her country soul shows in ballads like Slow Love. Contrary to the album title, these songs make it feel like she IS from the windy city. Of note is the spirited playing of Harpdog Brown, adding much to the vibe here. Power said she was really looking forward to playing the final mixes for him, then he passed away unexpectedly January 7th before she could. Knowing Harpdog well enough to exchange emails on a semi-regular basis, I'm confident in saying he would have been well pleased with the end results.

I'm Not From Chicago is big fun, a blues adventure with many facets informed by Debra Power's musical life to this point. From tear-the-roof-off-this-dump blowout rockin' blues numbers to weepers like the Covid-inspired The Woman With A Hole In Her Heart, virtually no stone goes unturned on this puppy. On this number in particular you can hear something of the gospel in Debra's powerful voice, not unlike Etta James.

The album, produced by Steve Dierkens and Debra herself, was recorded and mastered in Calgary. All songs were written by Power with the exception of Hardwired For The Blues by Steve Pineo. Great songs, top notch playing and excellent production make I'm Not From Chicago essential listening for every blues fan. [www.debrapower.com](http://www.debrapower.com)

**HOT TRACKS: New Shade Of Blue, The Last Time I Saw Memphis, Slow Love**

# DEBRA POWER I'M NOT FROM CHICAGO CD

Released Feb 6, 2022

Cora Price - Fraser Valley Blues Society

Although singer, piano player and songwriter Debra Power comes from Calgary Alberta, Canada, she totally captures Debra Power, the award-winning song writer, vocalist and keyboardist from Calgary, has spent her COVID time well. She's just released her 3rd CD, I'm Not From Chicago, a stellar collection of boogie woogie tunes you are sure to enjoy. Debra Power has been recognized as a talented musician and composer, receiving numerous awards and earning the title of an IBC semi-finalist in Memphis, twice.

This collection of 10 original tunes includes collaborations with two well-known musicians, Harpdog Brown & Keeshea Pratt. Harpdog's harmonica contribution can be heard on three tracks, including the title song, I'm Not From Chicago. This could very well be the last work of Harpdog Brown, as he passed suddenly in January 2022.

I'm Not From Chicago, begins with a catchy guitar riff. A fast-moving tune tells us the story of Debra's love of the blue and her Mother's influence to sing strong and loud and spread the news! Throughout the song, you can clearly hear the Dog's signature harp playing.

The first single released earlier this year, features Keeshea Pratt on vocals and is titled "What Colour is Love". An inspirational and statement song, asks us to look beyond skin colour and remember the human connection – "you are not a colour and nor am I". Beautiful piano and amazing harmonies!

Haunting piano introduces the cut, The Last Time I Saw Memphis. Visitors to Memphis for the IBCs can likely relate to the lyrics and as the story unfolds, we get an understanding of why Debra no longer drinks gin. There's a special something in this song (a Harpdog chuckle) that adds a sweet touch and memory (if you ever got to see the Dog live). As the song progressed, I envisioned this as a lead-in tune for a tv or movie production.

The CD includes personal stories (Debra Marie), love songs (Slow Love), songs you can't help dancing to (Magnificent Heart, Hardwired for the Blues, New Shade of Blue). This feel-good release demonstrates Debra's full spectrum of talent.

## DEBRA POWER- I'M NOT FROM CHICAGO

(Eric Thom) Published on March 31, 2022 in John's Blues Picks

<https://torontobluesociety.com/>

Anyone who has witnessed this red-headed fireball deliver her brand of the blues live can never forget her. And yes, with 2,618 kilometres between Calgary and Chicago, she's not anywhere near the Windy City – yet her music can transport you instantly. A wicked piano-player, powerful vocalist and all-round nuclear explosion of a personality, Power is also a budding lyricist and capable songwriter – with only one non-original across ten songs.

Blasting off with “Magnificent Heart”, the word ‘dynamic’ doesn’t quite cover the ball-busting, in-your-face experience, pushing her vocals slightly. Guitarist Steve Pineo’s “Hardwired For The Blues” proves the perfect cover for her as a slightly subdued Power bites into it utilizing a slower, more soulful approach – piano always in the foreground, joining Pineo’s slide and Mike Clark’s tenor sax. The Mississippi-based Keeshea Pratt joins Power for the hard-hitting, soulful duet, “What Colour Is Love” – with its elevated message, delivered with sisterly gusto. The deeper blues groove of “New Shade Of Blue” is Power at her best – as she melds with her band (Chris Byrne, bass; Kelly Kruse, drums; Mike Little, B3; Pineo & Clark – including a much-loved shot of harp from Harpdog Brown) as Power’s more relaxed pace brings out her best playing and singing. Likewise, “Slow Love” is another slow burn and strong band number, as Power offers a strong, pleading vocal with strong accents from Clark’s tenor sax and Little’s B3. “I’m Not From Chicago” brings Harpdog back into the fold and moves things much closer to Chicago, thanks to his distinctive brand of mid-‘50’s, Chi-town blues while, Pineo takes a step forward with a stronger guitar presence. Power’s vocal and front-and-centre piano style abounds. A true story-song, “The Last Time I Saw Memphis”, spins a tall tale that, in Power’s hands, sounds entirely believable, aided by Pineo’s slide, a mood-building band performance and another stand-out Harpdog cameo, adding harp and the voice of Elvis’ ghost.

One of the album’s greatest moments comes with the highly personal “The Woman With The Hole In Her Heart”. While it tackles depression – if not the stress brought on by the isolation of the last two years – its strong piano arrangement and compelling vocal is entirely uplifting, with great B3 and slide guitar adding to the overall effect – a real show-stopper. The bouncy, infectious “Put Down The Baggage” is yet another demonstration of Power’s effortless range and specific piano skills, incorporating jazzy barrelhouse, stride and good ol’ boogie woogie at will, as the band drives home its tight rhythmic core. Mike Clark’s tenor sax is on parade while Power struts her stuff, offering one of her most-focused piano solos. Originally written to crack up her mother with reminiscences of her childhood, “Debra Marie” provides a universal glimpse into childhood and the precious relationship we carry with us. At the same time, this highly personal song is a showcase for Power’s innate sense of humour – while it helps to provide a backdrop to a true, consummate entertainer. (Eric Thom)

# DEBRA POWER – I’M NOT FROM CHICAGO I - ALBUM REVIEW

POSTED ON JULY 8, 2022 BY ANITA SCHLANK - BLUES BLAST MAGAZINE

Self-Released – 10 Tracks; 44 minutes - 2022 - [www.debrapower.com](http://www.debrapower.com)

Debra Power is a dynamic pianist from Canada with a powerful voice and excellent songwriting skills. She took home Calgary’s award for Blues Recording of the Year for her debut album, *Even Redheads Get the Blues*, and has been both a semi-finalist and a finalist in the International Songwriting Competition. She has also been a semi-finalist in the solo/duo category in the International Blues Challenge in Memphis and was nominated for Best New Artist at the Maple Blues Awards in 2017.

Power collaborated with some excellent musicians for her latest album, “I’m Not From Chicago”. For example, the late Harpdog Brown joined her on harmonica, Mike Clark played saxophone, and Steve Pineo is featured on guitar, and throughout the album their solos are all extremely tasteful. Additionally, guest singer Keeshea Pratt joins Power for a duet. Their beautiful song, “What Colour is Love,” also delivers a powerful message about racial prejudice which is much needed in these times of increased hate speech.

**The album features all originals (with one exception) and includes a variety of tempos and moods.** “The Last Time I Saw Memphis” is an intriguing story of a drunken night in Memphis and a spooky close encounter with what might have been Elvis’ ghost. The title track is noted to be inspired by Gil Anthony, who is also not from Chicago but also loves the blues, and “The Woman with the Hole in Her Heart” accurately describes the depression many felt secondary to the COVID lockdown.

The album ends with two amusing songs. The first is about people who carry too much emotional baggage around with them, and the final song has an “old-timey” feel to it, as Power reminisces about how mother would use both her first and middle name to let her know she was in trouble. (“Debra Marie—get in this house. Debra Marie—you’d better watch your mouth!”)

The only relative weakness of the album is that Power sometimes emphasizes the amusing story-telling quality of her voice to the degree that melodic tone can be sacrificed. However, her singing abilities are clearly evident in two songs: “The Woman with the Hole in her Heart” and “The Colour of Love”.

Overall, “I’m Not From Chicago” is a very enjoyable album, and it seems clear that it will bring Debra Power even **more notoriety**.

## **APR 2022 DEBRA POWER “I’M NOT FROM CHICAGO” ARTISTA / GRUPO: DEBRA POWER**

**By Vicente Zumell- a Hora del Blues - Spain**

**Artista / Grupo: Debra Power**

**Álbum: “I’m Not From Chicago”**

**Discográfica: Self Production**

**Año publicación: 2022**

**Fecha crítica: 04/2022**

**Valoración: GREAT★★★★**

**Sitio web: <http://www.debrapower.com>**

Although singer, piano player and songwriter Debra Power comes from Calgary Alberta, Canada, she totally captures in this new release all the essence and the most traditional Chicago blues sound and boogie-woogie, as well as developing some lyrics full of heartbreaking meanings and a lot of feeling. In recent years Debra has received several awards nominations besides reaching the semi-finals of the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2016 and 2018.

This new album features ten songs where Debra Power and her piano are backed by a more than remarkable team of musicians such as Steve Pineo on guitars, Harpdog Brown on harmonica, Mike F. Little on Hammond B-3, Mike Clark on tenor sax, Chris Byrne on bass and Kelly Kruse on drums, plus the special collaboration of Keeshea Pratt on vocals, Ann Drzej Ryszka on drums and Neil Gunhold on acoustic guitar, these last three musicians performing in the song “What Colour Is Love”. All the musicians involved manage to develop the most traditional electric blues sounds, while Debra lets flow her incredible raw but at the same time passionate voice with a deep feeling and beautiful nuances, with intense piano riffs that will delight all listeners and make them reach the most unsuspected limits.