

Songs We Love: Irma Thomas, 'Crazy Love'

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[BENJAMIN NADDAFF-HAFREY](#)



Irma Thomas contributes "Crazy Love" to the *Instant Love* series, which features famous love songs that were originally sung by men about women, reimagined with female vocalists.

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"I choose songs with the intention of having something that I can understand," New Orleans soul legend [Irma Thomas](#) [told NPR](#) in 2010. "And in order to make it believable, you have to know what the song is about." Every two weeks, the New York-based label Instant Records is releasing a female vocalist's cover of a classic love song sung by a man about a woman. For her entry in the [Instant Love](#) series, Thomas chose [Van Morrison](#)'s ode to a peaceful, certain love.

YouTube

Van Morrison recorded "Crazy Love" in 1969, approximately 10 years after an 18-year-old Irma Thomas cut her first recording, "(You Can Have My Husband But) Don't Mess With My Man." Morrison was answering the cosmic folk he made on *Astral Weeks* with the rootsy soul of what would become his breakthrough solo album, *Moondance*. In the process, he moved even closer to the kind of music Thomas was already making.



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Thomas closes that circle. She's rendered the balladic "Crazy Love" as pure NOLA R&B. She's backed by a stellar group of New Orleans musicians, who build a rollicking, grooving scaffold for her breathtakingly expressive voice. Her band swings harder than Morrison's on the original, thanks especially to Eric Heigle's shuffling shakers paired with kick and snare. There's even a touch of funk in the light cowbell and syncopated, staccato bass and guitar line that emerge on the chorus.

At the center of it all, though, is Thomas' voice. This is a song and a story that, to use her term, she understands. Her voice stretches across time and somehow unifies the mischievous love of a song like "(You Can Have My Husband But) Don't Mess With My Man" with the tranquil, deep bond on "Crazy Love." In her hands, the "crazy" of the chorus is less about *l'amour fou* than it is about the wonderful impracticality of unconditional love — wherever, whenever and with whomever.

<http://www.npr.org/2017/03/28/521639458/songs-we-love-irma-thomas-crazy-love>