

## new releases

whole by some philosophical musings of Arnold. That anecdote appears to be a fitting illustration of band dynamics—the trio seems to feed off of each other's creativity. On *Give It Away* they're also joined by drummer Scotty Hawkins and Arnold's brother, Leroy Arnold. Leroy made his brother's first gas can guitar in 1946 and has been an influence ever since, even after his death in 2015. As a tribute to Leroy, the band is offering a free download of this album on CD Baby in April 2016.

Arnold spent most of his career playing bass. He had stints with his high school band, J Floyd & the Shamrocks (which featured a young James Brown on piano), the Muddy Waters Band, Redd Foxx (that is Arnold playing the famous bass line on the theme song for *Sanford & Son*) and Bill Withers before finally coming back home to South Carolina in the 1980s. He also puts on his annual Cornbread & Collard Greens Blues Festival in April and has recently opened Dr. Mac Arnold's Blues Restaurant and Music Venue in Greenville, South Carolina.

Additional album highlights include the ramshackle ramble of road life in *Train Smoke*, the sweet kitchen love affair in *Don't*

*Burn My Cornbread* and the guitar-picking trip down memory lane in *Uncle Dewitt's Café*. *Give It Away* ends with *Memories*, a final poignant tribute to Leroy. All in all, this is a great collection of contemporary electric and occasionally acoustic blues overseen by a true original.

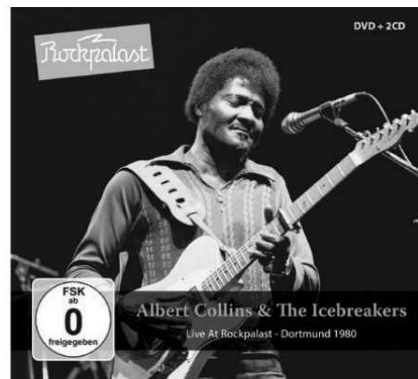
—Mark Coltrain

## ALBERT COLLINS & THE ICEBREAKERS

### Live at Rockpalast

MIG – 90632

Recorded in Dortmund, Germany, in 1980, for the television series *Rockpalast*, *Live at Rockpalast* captures Albert Collins & the Icebreakers in the midst of the career revival the singer-guitarist experienced when he recorded a series of albums for the Alligator label. The iconic Texas bluesman is in top form, and he really soars with a powerful, super tight band behind him. This two-CD,



one-DVD set is a welcome and valuable addition to his discography/videography.

A relative of Lightnin' Hopkins, this Texas master of the telecaster forged an individual style that melded influences from T-Bone Walker and B.B. King, distinguished by a unique fingerpicking approach. One of the beauties of the video here is that this is pre-MTV concert footage, so the unrelenting jump-cut edits and rapid-fire switching of camera angles had not yet come into vogue. There are plenty of sustained shots of the full band and individual soloists, as

# Chris Beard Is Back!

## NEW CD

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"Eye of the Witch is further proof that Chris Beard remains a force to be reckoned with on today's blues scene."  
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well as close-ups of both the guitarist's hands squeezing blues magic from six strings. For guitar players looking for a master class, this footage is a gold mine! One of the things that also comes through on the video, which is not apparent on the audio recordings, is how physical Collins was as a performer. He kicks his legs like a kung fu fighter as he accents searing notes or slashing chords. He literally wields his guitar like an axe, swinging it with great flair and drama, moves that are facilitated by his signature slinging of his guitar strap solely over his right shoulder. It is a real pleasure to watch this blues master interact with his band and unleash one magnificent solo after another.

The Icebreakers—tenor saxophonist A.C. Reed, guitarist Marvin Jackson, bassist Johnny B. Gayden and drummer Casey Jones—are right on the money. Of course, Reed was a veteran sideman and emerged as a leader in his own right during this time. He is an inventive soloist and his flowing riffs punctuate and accent Collins' solos. Gayden and Jones lay down a heavy funk groove, and Jackson's rhythm work and fills provide a perfect counterpoint to Collins' dramatic statements. Collins is a soulful singer, but clearly his guitar playing is center stage. The program, which is the same on the DVD as on the two CDs, mixes covers and originals. The former include: saxophonist Eddie Harris' funky *Listen Here*; the Jessie Mae Robinson-penned, T-Bone Walker hit *Cold Cold Feeling*; Guitar Slim's *The Things I Used to Do*; the Homer Banks / Raymond Jackson penned, Albert King classic *Angel of Mercy*; and two R&B gems, Johnny Morisette's *Brick* and Little Johnny Taylor's *If You Love Me Like You Say*. The originals from Collins include extended jams on his classics, including *I Got a Mind to Travel*, *Frosty*, *Cold Cuts* and *Ice Pick*. **Live At Rockpalast** testifies to the tremendous originality and power that Albert Collins brought to the blues. Longtime fans will welcome it with open arms, and newcomers should brace themselves for a knockout punch!

—Robert H. Cataliotti

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Meet Me In the Bottom

Stackhouse – SARC-1916

In 1976 the University of Arkansas–Pine Bluff sponsored Louis Guida's documentation of the current state of Arkansas blues. The first batch of recordings from Guida's project was released in 1983 on the Rooster Blues LP **Keep It to Yourself**, which bore the

self-explanatory subtitle **Arkansas Blues: The Solo Performers** and was re-released on an expanded CD by the successor Stackhouse imprint in 2004. Now, at long last, Stackhouse has brought out the promised sequel, logically subtitled **Arkansas Blues Volume 2: The Bands**.

The 15-track disc is opened and closed by Queen Bee and the Soul Seekers, a family band from Prattsville comprised of

sisters Essie (guitar), Mary (bass) and Merrill (drums), with Essie (who has more recently recorded as Essie Neal) taking the vocal on the Chuck Berry-styled *Shake Your Butt* and dad Richard joining in on harmonica and vocals on *Jump*. In between we get three tracks each from singer-guitarist Duke Bradley, who covers Albert King, Larry Davis and Willie Cobbs at the Jungle Hut in Pine Bluff; Osceola's Sounds of Soul, with drummer



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