

# In a Blue Mood

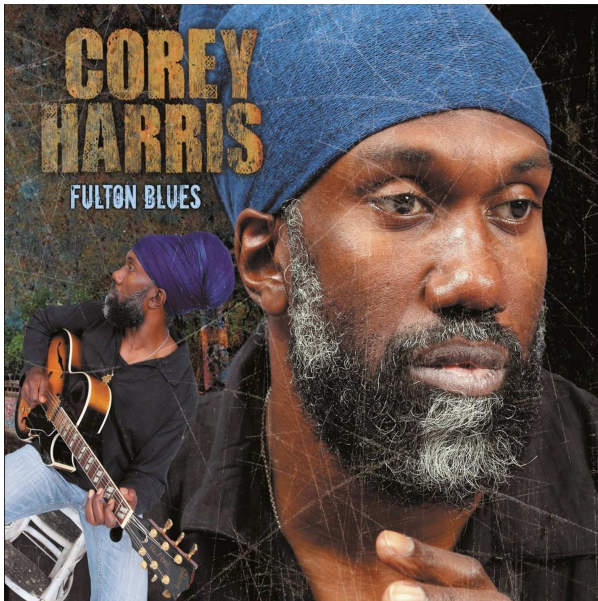
Ron Weinstock's semi-regular collection of observations, reviews and more about blues, jazz and other matters informed by the blues tradition.

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

## Corey Harris - Fulton Blues



Corey Harris' **Fulton Blues**, originally issued by Corey, has been reissued with a couple of bonus tracks added on Blues Boulevard Records. As noted on his Corey's website, "Fulton is a community in Richmond, VA that is older than the city itself. From its docks on the James River, the first African captives were marched to the city's slave market to be sold into bondage. This Black town on the east end of the city endured for more than 300 years until its land was seized and the families living there were forcibly evicted in the name of greed masquerading as progress."

**Fulton Blues** presented some new and classic blues songs and "the fourteen songs on the album range from love, loss and longing to celebration, tragedy and triumph." In addition to Corey Harris vocals, guitar and banjo, others on this recording include Chris 'Peanut' Whitley on keyboards; Gordon 'Saxman' Jones on saxophones and horn arrangements; Jason "Brother" Morgan on bass; Ken 'Trini Jo' Joseph on drums, Hook Herrera on harmonica and Joshua Achalam on percussion.

This is the first recording I have heard Harris in a urban blues setting as on the opening *Crying Blues*, a lyric of lonesomeness with Saxman Jones providing simple horn riffs in support. It sounds like he may be playing two saxophones at the same time which may account for the somewhat simplistic horn arrangements. The solo *Underground* sounds like a blues about the underground railroad with its allusions to the devil being out on in the broad daylight and how the devil broke up the family. With its simple backing that evokes the late Ali Farka Toure, and Harris' performance here is similarly mesmerizing. A solo original, *Black Woman Blues*, exhibits a John Lee Hooker-North Mississippi Hills groove.

While Harris is known is best known for his adaptation of delta styled blues, the title track is a start lyric about the now gone community set against a adept Piedmont finger style accompaniment with Herrera adding support. Herrera is also present on Harris' moving rendition of Skip James' classic *Devil Got My Woman*. Harris' banjo feature, *Black Rag* is a



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lively number with lyrics suggestive of Blind Willie McTell's *Kill It Kid Rag*, and also sports a nice saxophone break. An insistent R&B styled rendition of *Catfish Blues*, has strong sax playing. It is followed by a delightful cover of Blind Blake's *That Will Happen No More*, and then *Lynch Blues* with an accompaniment that evokes *Cherry Ball Blues*, but stark lyrics that open "What do I see hangin' beneath the tree ..." Harris' deep singing, his repeated guitar riffs and Herrera's harmonica make for a deeply moving performance.



The original release of **Fulton Blues** closed with the full band on an instrumental *Fat Duck's Groove*, that allowed Harris to display his electric guitar playing with his crisp and clean fretwork. A couple of live performances are bonus tracks that were not included on the original release. Both *Better Way* and *Esta Loco* reflect Caribbean influences on Harris, ska on the former and latin on the latter. These are pleasant performances, if not having quite the gravitas of the rest of this CD.

**Fulton Blues** is an impressive recording that illustrates Corey Harris' ability to revive and invigorate older blues songs and styles.

I received my copy from the publicist or the record company. I had purchased a copy of the original release. Here is *Crying Blues* from **Fulton Blues**.

Posted by [Ron W](#) at 5:00 AM 

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Labels: [acoustic blues](#), [Blues](#), [Blues Boulevard](#), [Chris 'Peanut' Whitley](#), [Corey Harris](#), [Gordon 'Saxman' Jones](#), [Hook Herrera](#), [Jason "Brother" Morgan](#), [Joshua Achalam](#), [Ken 'Trini Jo' Joseph](#)

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