

was his first recording session and bassist Dave Young would later play with Oscar Peterson. Added to this trio is tenor saxophonist Don Menza, who brings a relaxed, melodic quality here to go with his oft sinewy attack.

The straight-ahead date opens with a swinging rendition of "Old Devil Moon," with Menza blasting off as the rhythm section pushes him along deftly before Downes exhibits why he was so highly regarded with his fluid, precise playing, followed by a short solo from the leader. Menza really gets going on Miles Davis' "Freddie Freeloader" from the legendary "Kind of Blue" recording, and his fervent solo is followed by Downes' fresh twist on the theme.

Menza's marvelous way with a ballad is exhibited on a lovely "Poor Butterfly," with the trio providing nice understated support. Young's bass joins Menza to state the theme of Miles Davis' "Solar" and his emphatic playing helps propel this swinging rendition. There are also lovely versions of Benny Golson's "I Remember Clifford," and Dave Young's wistful "What a Time We Had," which showcases Young's strong playing. Menza contributed the title track, which is a solid medium tempo blues from Menza's pen, which is followed by an alternate take of "Freddie Freeloader."

Throughout "Bones Blues" Menza is robust and tender as appropriate, and the trio of Magadini, Downes and Young are terrific in both their backing and their own playing. It simply is a wonderful recording of swinging, straight-ahead jazz. **Ron Weinstock**



COREY HARRIS

Fulton Blues

BLUES BOULEVARD RECORDS

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 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 on which I have heard Harris in an 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 simple 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, Harris' performance here is mesmerizing. A solo original, "Black Woman Blues" has 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 has a start lyric about the now gone community, set against an 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 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 staying marked by his crisp and clean fretwork. A couple of live performances are bonus tracks here that were not included on the original release. Both "Better Way" and "Esta Loco" reflect Caribbean influences on Harris, including ska on the former and Latin on the latter.

"Fulton Blues" an impressive recording that further displays Corey Harris' ability to revive and invigorate older blues songs and styles for a contemporary blues audience. **Ron Weinstock**

jazz-blues.com