

tions such as the opening “The Days of Wine of Roses,” which allows them to take a somewhat cerebral, but not cold, approach. One is immediately impressed by not only the leader’s gruff sound, but also Weber’s deliberate, and at times spare attack

Of the six compositions, five are standards and one is an original. The format also allows them to be informal and stretch out as on “Autumn leaves” with Weber’s meandering opening before Whigham takes off on the theme and the lyrics, slowly building and displaying a bit of swagger as he picks up steam here. The sole original is “Steve,” which is dedicated to the late British composer/arranger, Steve Gray, and is a somber ballad that showcases the rapport between Whigham and Weber. While Weber plays what might sound like musical fragments, Whigham hints at the melody of “Someday My Prince Will Come” before fully launching into a fresh rendition of a very familiar song, and Weber’s own solo with its almost Monkish approach (although lacking Monk’s stride roots) allows the listener to discover this as if hearing it for the first time.

Whigham rambles and rumbles through Milt Jackson’s “Bag’s Groove,” and Weber certainly avoids clichés in comping under Whigham, and in his own style, and the performance builds to a somewhat explosive ending before the trio refreshes “St. Thomas,” at times hinting at the theme and other times reconstructing it. If jazz is a music of surprise, that James Whigham and his trio delight us with surprises throughout this “Live at Nighttown.” “Not So Standards” itself suggests that they do not take the normal route in performance of these standards, but handle them in a free, abstract and fulfilling manner. Recommended. *Ron Weinstock*

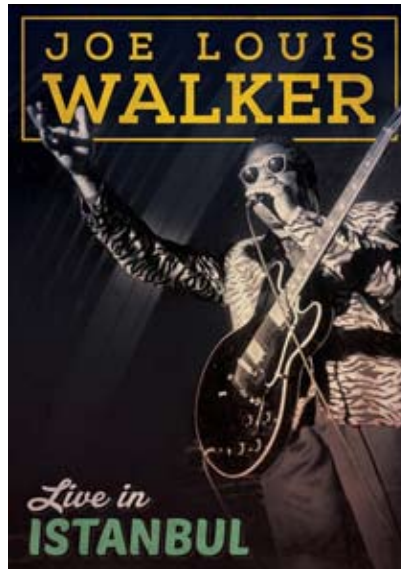
dvd

JOE LOUIS WALKER

Live In Istanbul
MVD VISUAL

MVD Visual has issued a DVD of Joe Louis Walker “Live In Istanbul” from 1995 when he made his first appearance in the Turkish Capital. He was backed by his Boss Talkers who at that time included Tom Rose: rhythm guitar / back-up vocals; Mike Eppley: keyboards / back-up vocals; Tony Saunders: bass and Curtis Nutall: drums / back-up vocals. This writer views Walker’s recordings and live performances from this time as favorites of a career that still is going very strong.

The DVD captures JLW in a typical set with his gospel inflected vocals and his strong guitar that brought together a variety of influences from Robert Lockwood and Ike Turner to Elmore James, B.B. King and Earl Hooker. He could handle traditional blues as well as get down and funky and handles such staples of his repertoire of the time as “Can’t get You off My Mind,” Ike Turner’s “You Got To Lose,” the smoldering “Bluesifyin’,” the topical “Street People,” and



the closing “Hidden Feelings.” There is also an extended showcase for the Boss Talkers “Funkin’ Blues.” I’m not sure how much audio or video restoration was used in preparing this DVD for release. The video does have a slightly faded quality, but it and the audio are more than acceptable. And the music seen and heard here is simply first-rate. “Live in Istanbul” brings back memories of seeing Joe Louis Walker & the Boss Talkers at Twist & Shout, Tornado Alley, and The Barns of Wolf Trap. And those are quite good memories. *Ron Weinstock*

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

What the ??? Where did summer go? Is it possible that Labor Day is upon us? Well, if it must be fall, we might as well hear some **NEW RELEASES**: **Dave & Phil Alvin- *Lost Time***; **Buddy Guy- *Born to Play Guitar***; **Sonny Landreth- *Bound By the Blues***; **Various Artists- *Muddy Waters 100***; **Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters- *Father’s Day***; **Mick Kolass- *Ghosts of Riverside Hotel***; **Bob Malone- *Mojo Deluxe***; **Jay Gordon & Blues Venom- *Woodchoppers Ball***; **Smoky Greenwell’s New Orleans Blues Jam- *Live at the Old U.S. Mint***; **Brad Wilson- *Blues Thunder***; **Christian Collin- *Spirit of the Blues***; **Hot Roux- *Stranger’s Blues***; **The Betty Fox Band- *Slow Burn***; **Kern Pratt- *Broken Chains***; **David Michael Miller- *Same Soil***; **The Josh Garrett Band- *Honey for my Queen***; **John Cocuzzi *Ding Dong Daddy***; **Hans Theessink and Terry Evans- *True & Blues Live***; **The JC Smith Band- *Love Mechanic***; **Henry Gray/Bob Corritore Sessions- *Blues Won’t Let Me Take My Rest***; **Rick Vito- *Mojo On My Side***; **Deb Ryder- *Let It Rain***; **Albert Cummings- *Someone Like You***; **The Lucky Losers- *A Winning Hand***; **Laura Tate- *I Must Be Dreaming- A Tribute to the music of Mel Harker***; **Ghost Town Blues Band- *Hard Road to Hoe***; **Lazer Lloyd- *Lazer Lloyd***; **Robert Cray- *4 Nights of 40 Years Live***; **Samantha Fish- *Wild Heart***; **Arlen Roth- *Slide Guitar Summit***; **Jay Jesse Johnson- *Set the Blues On Fire***; **Blinddog Smokin’-*High Steppin’***;