

Bernard Allison - No Mercy / 2004 Inakustik / 9 Tracks / <http://www.inakustik.com> / Reviewed 18 August 2006

I don't know many of the names of those individuals that are mentioned as the writers of the songs on this live set. Of course, Allison starts out with the B.B. King classic "Rock Me Baby", a track that gets individuals out of their seats and bouncing around. The guitar work is absolutely amazing during this track, and the bass struggles to keep alongside of it.

However, the unity between the different parts of the band is something that comes together quickly and may just be the highlight of the disc, only a few minutes after it had started. After the seven and a half minutes of "Rock Me Baby" Allison goes off into a number of other tracks that show of eir skills equally as well. All of the tracks on this disc are live, but the audience seems pretty removed from the entire concert; this helps individuals hear exactly what Allison and eir band is trying to do, but I would like to hear that there are hundreds of individuals listening to the funky, soul-stirring blues that Allison is known for. Each of the tracks brings something new to the table. For example, the use of the synth during "Don't Go To Sleep On Me" gives another individual a major role in the creation of a specific sound, while the drums step their game during "Break'in Up Somebody' Home".

Each of the tracks on "No Mercy" do not stray from the formula that was laid out by Allison at the beginning of the disc. This means that the soulful blues of "Rock My Baby" is mirrored during "Help". While this is not a studio album, the professionalism of the soundboard during this track makes the choice between the two (live and studio) a hard one in choice of overall quality. While it is good to see Allison doing eir own thing, there is a more full sound given to this soundboard recording. This is due to the fact that the camera cannot capture any one specific aspect of the band. When a camera does that, it has the effect of giving a highlight to that specific piece (drums, guitars, vocals, whatever) until the camera switches focuses. The CD actually is more egalitarian than the DVD in this sense. This disc is well worth the cost to any fan of Allison, or anyone that has a love for blues and well done music.

Top Tracks: Rock Me Baby, Change Your Way of Living

Rating: 6.4/10

-James McQuiston  
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