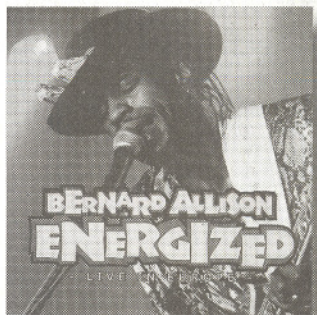# CD REVIEWS

BERNARD ALLISON
Energized: Live in Europe
Ruf

With festival season upon us already, having Bernard Allison on CD and DVD at this time of the year just adds to the euphoria. Recorded before a large crowd at The Musa in Göttingen, Germany late last year, Allison's nearly two-hour performance rocks with a contemporary blues formula that could win friends and influence people all over the world. The program is featured both as a 2-CD package and as a DVD.

With him in the band for this exciting session are Mike Vlahakis on keyboards, Jassen Wilber on bass and Andrew Thomas at the drum set. Together, they ride the slow and cool waves expressively and stretch out fiercely elsewhere. Sometimes they do both. The whole idea about experiencing a live recording is that the artists are at a creative high. A fine communicator, Allison sings 11 songs convincingly and adds fiery guitar licks to those numbers as well as several instrumentals.

Camera close-ups feature each of the four blues-men at arm's length, while distance shots pick up the audience reaction at its fullest extent. Bathed in bright red and blue lights, the large room comes alive with the night's action. When Allison sings "A Woman Named Trouble" he gets your body moving to the beat. Similarly, originals such as "Into My Life" and "Too Many Women" allow him to push contemporary blues to its limit. Luther Allison's "Bad Love" is treated to an extended, 13-minute celebration. Several extended romps give the program plenty of horsepower. It looks like the energy flowing from this concert is more than enough to solve the world's gas and oil shortage.

-- Jim Santella

SLICK BALLINGER
Mississippi Soul
Oh Boy Records

Just 21 years old and filled with the desire to re-create old-school Delta blues on his hollow-body guitar, Slick Ballinger works with two veterans while singing this program of originals and earthy covers. Blind Mississippi Morris stands by his side, delivering a full complement of harp melo-

DEBBIE DAVIES

Coming to the
Doheny Lake
Blues Festival

Reviews

n Lee Hooker, Jr
hard Allison R.J. Mischo
k Ballinger Chris Thomas King
Sherman Robertson

2006 Blues Music Awards

Southland BLUES

OVER 500 LIVE BLUES LISTINGS

June 2006   Volume 17   No. 6

CALIFORNIA