

Crowin' The Blues

Professor Louie & The Crowmatix
Woodstock Records
<http://www.professorlouie.com/>
13 Tracks



Professor Louie & The Crowmatix are a veteran group out of Woodstock New York. There was a long relationship with Rick Danko, Levon Helm and all the members of The Band. He was heavily involved in their last 3 releases. This release is their 13th. The leader is Professor Louie (Aaron Hurwitz) who sings and plays keys and accordion. The remaining band members are John Platania (guitar & vocals), Miss Marie (vocals, percussion), Gary Burke (drums) and Frank Campbell (bass & vocals). The musical style mixes blues, rock and other Americana influences. The tunes are mostly covers, with only 5 originals on this CD.

The opening cut is "I'm Gonna Play The Honky Tonks". This one was written by Don Robey and Marie Adams on Peacock Records in 1951. The song is a faster paced R&B tune that showcases the entire band. The band original "Prisoner Of Your Sound" has a bit of New Orleans R&B sound to it. Burke's drums really keep things moving on this tune. The tune "High Heel Sneakers" has been covered many times. The band slowed it down just a bit and used the organ on it, but nothing new here. "Love Is Killing Me" is a slower soulful tune, written by the band. Josh Colow and Michael Falzarano add some guitar work to this tune. It is a pretty good tune. Another bluesy original is "Blues & Good News". It is a keyboard instrumental with Miss Marie adding some whistling.

The blues slide guitar sound of Elmore James shows through on "Fine Little Mama". Platania shows his licks, with solid piano from the Professor. On the 7th cut the band tackles a tune from the prolific Jimmy McCracklin. "I Finally Got You" has a west coast feel, with a fast pace. On the oldie "Why Did You Do That To Me" the Professor breaks out his accordion. This one was written by the great Big Bill Broonzy. The cover of B.B. King's "Confessin' The Blues" was sung by Miss Marie. The song is much more a piano tune than a King guitar tune, though his original had keys and horns in prominent positions.

In the blues heroes round up that this CD is, it is great to hear some Jimmy Reed. The Professor put together a fine version

of "Bright Lights, Big City". Naturally there is more keys than guitar on this version. A cover of the great Jimmy Rogers tune "That's Alright" is up next. Miss Marie handles the vocals on this slightly slower version of the Chicago blues classic. The band penned tune "I'm On My Way" opens a fair bit like "In A Gadda Da Vida" with the organ first few guitar notes. After that it is a mid tempo blues song. Closing out the CD is a tribute to the great Buckwheat Zydeco called "Blues For Buckwheat". The accordion is back, and the band bangs thru this zydeco/blues instrumental tune. Professor Louie helped out on Buckwheat's 2005 release Jackpot!.

Overall this is a pleasing CD. There are many covers, but they are giving a different feel than they usually get. This is a veteran band that knows what they are doing. Being recorded live in the studio adds to the feel of the music. If you like blues piano, and a rockin' feel to your blues, then this one is for you. Give it a listen.

Reviewed by Mark Nelson

Bloodstains On The Wall

Big Bill Morganfield
Black Shuck Records
www.bigbillmorganfield.org/
12 Tracks



Wow!! This is now the 7th release by Big Bill Morganfield. Big Bill grew up in Florida, away from his famous father Muddy Waters. His early life included college, earning degrees from Tuskegee University and one Auburn University. His recording career began in the late 90's. He sounds like his father, and the resemblance is both physical and in his performance style. The release contains only 4 originals, but the covers are pretty cool. At times he plays old style, and at others, he merges with the hip hop style. The main band (Mofo Party Band) includes John Clifton (guitar, harmonica), Bill Clifton (guitar), Grant Clifton (bass), Brian Bishel (drums) and Bartek Szopinski (Piano/organ). There are some special guests too!

The opening cut is "Lost Without Love" written by the great Lonesome Sundown. It is a slower swampy blues tune. Colin Linden and Eddie Taylor Jr. join in on guitar for this one. Things get old Chicago style on the Willie Dixon penned "I Don't Know Why". Big Bill is joined by Steve

Guyger (harmonica) and Bob Margolin (guitar) on this fast paced Chicago blues favorite. On "When You Lose Someone You Love" Big Bill really sounds like his dad on the self penned slow Chicago blues tune. Bartek Szopinski shows his piano chops on this one. This tune is a tribute to his Mother who passed away recently. Big Bill's slide guitar is in full swing on this one too. Jimmy Reed recorded the Oscar Boyd tune "Too Much". Linden and Taylor Jr. are back on this one with Doc Malone on harp. I really like this tune, done in the slower paced Jimmy Reed style.

The Mofo Party Band returns on the fast paced "Help Someone". This tune penned by Big Bill is a rocking success. There is some New Orleans in this one. I like "Bloodstains On The Wall" it is an angry snarling slow modern blues tune. It was written Hank "Honeyboy" Pratt in the late 1920's, and still seems relevant to the violence in our society today. Augie Myers adds piano to the cut. The 7th cut is "Can't Call Her Name". Big Bill wrote this about a lover so good, that he kept her name a secret. It is a nice blues shuffle. I hear a bit of New Orleans in the Lisa Stansfeld penned "Wake Up Baby". It is a bit old timey, and certainly has an R&B feel to it.

Big Bill rolls out the fine tune from Otis Rush "Keep On Loving Me". It is a hard firing faster blues tune. This is a really good tune. The great Willie Dixon tune "I Am The Blues" is the next tune. This tune gets a bit of a more modern styling. The great Jimmy McCrackin wrote "Help The Bear". I did not remember this tune, but it certainly did enjoy it. It is a rockin' R&B tune. The CD closes with a special track that Big Bill recorded for a TV show Shots Fired. It is a blues tune with a bit of hip hop electronics mixed into it. Bill played a part in the series also. The show deals with police brutality with Black youths in their community.

Overall this is a pretty solid release. Big Bill wants to reclaim the blues as American Black Music. I hope this release helps that dream. Certainly Big Bill has close ties to his Father's legacy, looks and style, yet he is his own man. He will be at the Chicago Blues Festival this June. Everyone should go hear him honor his legacy, and put forth his modern agenda for the music we love. Grab the CD and his other fine work too.

Reviewed by Mark Nelson