

BLUESBLAST

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FEATURED BLUES MUSIC REVIEW

Hank Shreve Band – *Loosen Up!*

www.hankshreveband.com

Boogie Boss Records / 12 songs time-55:15

The Pacific Northwest doesn't usually come to mind as a hotbed of the blues. Hank Shreve and his band could easily dispel that notion. Their brand of R&B and blues tempered by funk and soul is sure to catch the attention of music lovers from near and far. Hank brings his world class harmonica chops and soulful vocals to the party along with his keyboard skills. He enlists two interchangeable and strong guitarists along with a rock steady rhythm section. Having ten well

written original tunes along with two well performed cover songs surely doesn't hurt.

Kicking things off with a soulful song infusing a truly catchy guitar riff along with Hank's nicely gritty vocals and acrobatic harmonica playing is a smart move. "Feelin Better" does the trick as it combines R&B and the blues in a hearty stew. It leads straight into the title track, a jump blues showcasing Hank's piano playing, harmonica and Ken Luker on guitar. This one is guaranteed to get you up off your "rusty dusty". Nifty tom-toms on this one as well... and heck the harp licks get more intricate and tasty as this record proceeds.

Ken Luker once again displays his guitar talents over a reggae rhythm in "Out On The Streets", as it comments on the life situation. The band's take on Lucille Bogan's time-tested chestnut "Sweet Little Angel" shows that hank is no slouch on the organ either, as things get funky up in here. The guys nicely execute group vocals on "Hurt Enough", as they do at other times on this recording. This song also features a soothing acoustic guitar solo by Ken Luker.

"What Ya Gonna Do" skirts southern rock territory with a infectious groove bolstered by harmonica and guitar. The band's version of Norton Buffalo's "Is It Love" is a funky blues workout. Stan Welsh provides quick fire blues-rock guitar, just burnin' up the place as well as Hank's vocal and harp. "Bad News" talks about a no account woman over a heavy musical assault featuring harmonica as usual.

The funky "Playin' In The Band" with it's heavy guitar and nice organ solo could well be used in a live performance as the band introduction song. The slow burning R&B of "Don't Want You Back" has Paul Biondi contributing some tasty sax work. Hank gets a chance to show off his considerable piano skills on the closing song "Everyday". The record closes out on an upbeat note.

This band definitely has the right tools for the job. They have an excellent front man who also happens to be a world class harmonica player, as well as having keyboard skills. The guitarists and rhythm section are on the same level of excellence. Plus they have solid songs to go with the musicianship. The energy and execution are here as well. You can't miss with this one.

Reviewer Greg "Bluesdog" Szalony hails from the New Jersey Delta.