



Hank Shreve Band – *That Way*

Self-Release – 2023

www.hankshreveband.com

10 tracks; 44 minutes

Hank Shreve and his band come from the Pacific Northwest and this is their fourth album release. The band is axed round brothers Hank and Bill Shreve and whilst their prime instruments are harmonica and bass respectively, they also cover lap-steel, drums, percussion, guitar and keys (Hank) and keys, guitar, trumpet and sax (Bill). Ken Luker is on lead guitar, Tim Donahue drums and lead vocals are shared between Hank (seven), Bill (two) and Ken (one). The material includes three songs written by Hank, one each by Bill and Ken and one written by all three, alongside four interestingly diverse covers.

We start with the title track, Hank's lap-steel giving the song a country feel as he sings of how much he likes the way his girl treats him. "Don't Know" has an old-timey feel with a loping rhythm over which sax, trumpet and harp add jazzy overtones. Big Bill Broonzy's "I Feel So Good" is played at a ferocious pace with great vocals, pounding piano and exciting harp and guitar breaks, making this a very successful makeover of a tried and tested classic. Opening with Hank's high register harp and percussion effects, the late Norton Buffalo's "Hoodoo Roux" allows the band to explore its love of New Orleans music as the song name checks voodoo queens and black cat bones. It is also a lengthy cut at over seven minutes, allowing the band to take its time to good effect. The funky "Applegate Road" is guitarist Ken's tune which he sings well while offering solo opportunities to the rhythm section. Robert Parks' "I'm Out" is an obscure choice, originally released in 1958 by The Surf Riders. The original was rockabilly but this version is more of a stop-start blues rhythm and works equally well as Ken takes a plucked solo and Hank blows a storm over the insistent beat.

The song written by Hank, Bill and Ken is "Back In Your Life", with Bill on lead vocal. Plenty going on here, the jagged beat offset by twinkling piano and a *tour-de-force* harp solo. "The Thing" is a lively instrumental which features Hank's harp and Ken's guitar before Bill's "Think" brings in a healthy dose of soul as the rhythm section bounds along with horns adding to the bigger sound of the track. Perhaps the most unlikely choice is Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" (though one should remember that the saxophonist did play with Santana as well as Weather Report and Miles Davis) but it is a very successful cover of a jazz classic, Hank's harp taking most of the leads alongside guest Ran Andreini on piano.

This is a splendidly diverse album that incorporates jazz and country influences into the standard blues fare. Hank Shreve proves himself to be a fine harp player and the whole band deserves great credit for their contributions to the album.

Blues Blast Magazine Senior writer John Mitchell is a blues enthusiast based in the UK who enjoys a wide variety of blues and roots music, especially anything in the 'soul/blues' category. Favorites include contemporary artists such as Curtis Salgado, Tad Robinson, Albert Castiglia and Doug Deming and classic artists including Bobby Bland, Howling Wolf and the three 'Kings'. He gets over to the States as often as he can to see live blues.