

**CHRIS MURPHY: Water Under The Bridge  
Teahouse (no issue number) (58:45)**

This is a very entertaining if eclectic set from this Los Angeles-based fiddler and somewhat less frequently vocalist and his accompanying musicians. The back of the CD sleeve notes that it contains 'original jazz, blues and swing violin music' which is certainly accurate but not the whole story.

All the tracks are indeed originals, but there is also ragtime and Cuban music here, the jazz ranges from the '20s to the '60s, and the blues sounds are from a similar time-span; there are also hints (or more) of Western Swing, old-timey playing, and zydeco in his approach to his music.

If you want to check him out beforehand, he has plenty of videos on YouTube; I would recommend you view the three and a half minutes of [www.youtube.com/watch?v=auPH384yxA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auPH384yxA), which is entitled 'A Short Film About Chris Murphy', and which provides a fine introduction to the man and his music.

**Norman Darwen**

**BACKTRACK BLUES BAND: Make My Home In  
Florida**

**Harpo Records (no issue number) (49:32)**

Phil Wight gave some background to this Florida band when reviewing this album's predecessor, 'Way Back Home', in *B&R* 314. They are a long-standing (their Ichiban release, 'Killin' Time', was reviewed in issue 63, and included this set's title track), hard-working, no-nonsense outfit, and on this set, recorded live in St. Petersburg, Florida early in 2017, they have a generally Chicago-based blues sound, steeped in the likes of Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson II and Muddy Waters, with a fine nod to T-Bone Walker in 'T-Bone Shuffle' and B.B. King with 'Woke Up This Morning'.

Lead vocalist Sonny Charles is also a top-notch harp player, showing his influences quite clearly, and contributing several worthwhile original songs. Lead guitarist Kid Royal supplies some very much in-context guitar playing: no over-the-top rock solos, just good, clean, to-the-point playing, with a top-notch rhythm section supporting beautifully. This release is a two disc package, also including a DVD of the show – it's worth investigating. [www.backtrackbluesband.com](http://www.backtrackbluesband.com)

**Norman Darwen**

**NORMAN BEAKER BAND: We See Us Later  
JNR 002 (67:53)**

This CD was acquired when the band supported a Chris Farlowe gig in Newcastle in December 2017. The band have always been a long established, sought after unit for visiting U.S.A. artists as well as home-grown stars and Norman fully justifies his induction into the American Blues Hall Of Fame in 2017.

This sixteen-track issue is all original except one, and the initial track 'Only I Got What The Other Guy Wants' starts as it means to carry on, and a real highlight is the magnificent saxophone playing of Kim Nishikawara.

Norman would probably be the first to admit that he is not the most outstanding vocalist in the world especially on ballads like 'Nobody Knows Where The Time Goes', 'Hard To Be Somebody' and 'I Believe In You'. However, his excellent guitar playing is displayed throughout and shines on 'Details', 'Time And Tide', 'If I Could Turn Away', 'Cheating Love', and 'Love Me Tonight'. Of the real blues tracks the two latter are the pick of the crop with fine organ backing from Nick Steed who is very distinctive throughout. On 'I Don't Want A Lover' he is joined on vocals and guitar by his great friend Larry Garner (who will be touring with him in the U.K. in May). A fine release that will satisfy existing fans and newcomers alike.

**Keith Scoffham**

**BOURBON HEAT 3 PIECE ORCHESTRA: Live At  
The Heat**

**Indie release (no issue number) (29:48)**

Bourbon Heat is a three-in-one place in the heart of Bourbon Street offering food, night club, and carriageway bar where in the latter a storm is kicked up from late afternoon until about 9pm by Gator (Wayne Folse) on guitar supported by a varying rhythm section. Playing virtually on the street what a treat it is if your music tastes stretch to Stevie Ray Vaughan, Cream, Allman Brothers and Jimi Hendrix as well as Elmore James *et al.* Gator is no ordinary bar room musician but a really fine exponent of electric guitar playing.

On this CD there are versions of 'Pride And Joy', 'Sunshine Of Your Love', 'Crossroads', 'Sky Is Crying', 'One Way Out' and 'Whipping Post'. He is ably supported by Lee Paker and Louis Smith. No qualms about recommending this release. It's terrific although short on playing time. Gator also has a 36:35 unplugged CD that fits those with more acoustic tastes. He can be contacted at USA-504-481-4872 and you can find him on YouTube.

**Keith Scoffham**

**NICO BRINA: Boogieful  
Stormy Monday Records MO81456 (44:05)**

From the European Stormy Monday imprint comes this release by Nico Brina, a pianist/vocalist/composer who I believe comes from Switzerland – according to his website he has a number of albums available. *B&R*'s Keith Scoffham was not bowled over by Nico's 'The B'day Session', reviewed in *B&R* 309.

This fourteen-track, all-original set features Nico's solo piano and vocal. He's a decent enough piano player, his vocals are a bit suspect on occasion though. However, there is nothing here that makes me want to hit the replay button. As Keith said, he's an adequate barroom pianist, but certainly can't hold a candle to the likes of Mike Sanchez for example.

Instantly forgettable, one for the bag for donations to the Oxfam book and record store.

**Phil Wight**

**STOMO'S ARTIST COLLECTION: Blues & Boogie  
Vol. 10**

**Stormy Monday Records MO81448 (73:58)**

Also from the Stormy Monday imprint comes this nineteen-track sampler. Artists include the well-known (Little Willie Littlefield, Steve Clayton), and the not so well known (including Al Jones, Pete Borel – who apparently is a 'Swiss guitar hero', Blues Rocket Men, Ginger Blues, Nico Brina, and Handful Of Blues).

Once again, with the exception of Littlefield's version of 'Bad Bad Whiskey' where he is accompanied by a capable r&b outfit called The Jivin' Jewels, and Steve Clayton's 'Travellin' Blues', there is nothing here to write home about. I had hoped for the good stuff from Handful Of Blues who play in a style akin to the similarly named Roomful Of Blues, but was to be disappointed by their lacklustre take on 'Let The Good Times Roll'. I also hoped for the good stuff from Albert Koch who plays harp with the group Tin Pan Alley, but was once again left feeling short-changed.

I guess if you frequent the Euro blues scene you may be familiar with these guys, and this CD may be a nice souvenir of a weekend spent at a blues bash somewhere in Euroland (I could make a Brexit joke here but can't think of one off the top of my head). Others can safely ignore. That Oxfam bag is getting heavier!

**Phil Wight**

**CLIMAX BLUES BAND: Live At The BBC 1970-  
1978**

**Repertoire REPUK1317 (Two CDs: 69:44; 61:24)**

The Chicago Climax Blues Band was formed in 1968 in Stafford in England. I remember watching them on the BBC 'Top Of The Pops', television show in 1976 when they mimed (as nearly every act did for that show), their excellent, Mike Vernon-produced hit single, 'Couldn't Get It Right'. Somewhere along the line they dropped the title 'Chicago', from their band title. The band toured the U.S.A. extensively in the 1970s and I understand they received a lot of favourable press then.

Given that some of this music is nearly fifty years old, some of it holds up surprisingly well. The band could certainly lay down some impressive electric blues licks augmented with some good saxophone playing and there is some nice melodic rock as on their impressive song 'Amerita/Sense Of Direction'. As is expected from BBC radio archives, the sound quality on this release is excellent, a few of the tracks are in mono and there is a nostalgic warmth in hearing DJs Pete Drummond and 'Whispering' Bob Harris introduce the band. A good release with a nice booklet and an essential purchase for their fans.

**Paul Mooney**

**INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE #33  
The Blues Foundation (no issue number) (57:02)**

The International Blues Challenge is an annual event that started in 1984 and has grown into a major showcase for today's blues scene. This set is an accurate representation of the breadth of the definition of blues these days (there's not a lot of rock here), with performers not only from the U.S.A. and Canada, but also as far away as Israel and Spain.