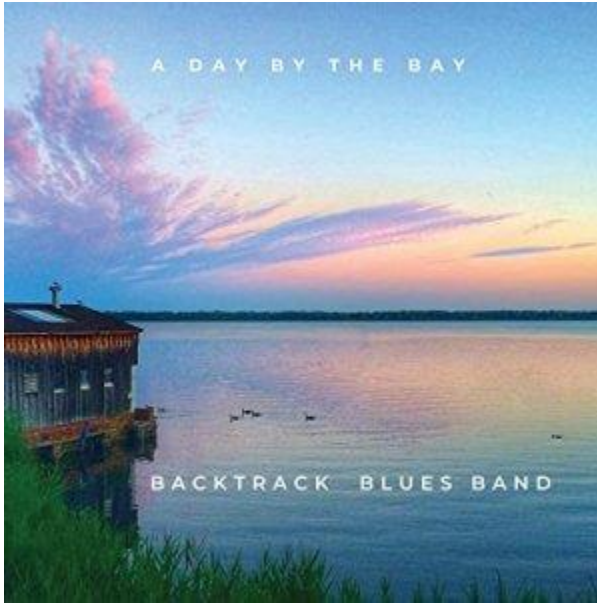


Blues Blast Magazine – June 8, 2023



Backtrack Blues Band - *A Day By The Bay*

Gulf Coast Records

www.backtrackbluesband.com

9 tracks/56 minutes

Recorded live at the Tampa Bay Blues Festival, the album features Tampa Bay area locals The Back Track Blues Band, a band with 42 years time together. Sonny Charles is lead vocalist and harmonica player. Kid Royal plays guitar and sings on three cuts. Little John Walter handles rhythm guitar and some backing vocals. The backline is Joe Bencomo on drums and Stick Davis on bass. The B3 organ player is Wayne Sharp. Latonya Oliver and Dana Merriweather offer up backing vocals, too. All the songs were penned by Charles except two;

Royal wrote the seventh track and there is one cover tune.

“Best Friend’s Grave” opens the album. Royal offers some cool licks on his guitar and Charles blows some nice harp and both offer some good solo work. The next cut is “Make My Home In Florida” and it’s the farthest thing from blues; not musically, but singing about how good it is in Florida just ain’t the blues, that’s just bragging! Seriously though, it’s a cool slow blues with more killer harp and guitar. “Help Me Just This Time” is a mid tempo shuffle with more of the same harp and guitar licks.

“Dixie Grill” continues with slick guitar and harp. The organ is more forward in the mix and adds to the sound. The lone cover on the album is Jimmy Reed’s “Natural Born Lover” with Royal fronting the group for a change of pace. We get more harp and guitar to appreciate and here we get our first organ solo, too! “Rich Man Blues” continues to offer well done harp and guitar.

“She Might Get Mad” is Royals song and he front’s the group for it. The harp and guitar get their turns soloing this jumping cut. “Times Is Hard” follows, a slow and thoughtful blues with some nice finger picking on guitar. Royal sings and plays, and the harp and organ gets some time leading the charge. Pretty, slow blues. The final track is ‘You’ll Come Back Someday,’ another cool shuffle with harp, organ and guitar taking turns excelling.

These guys are a solid group of Sarasota musicians who can play with the best of them. They write some good original cuts and put out some great tunes!

Blues Blast Magazine Senior writer Steve Jones is president of the Crossroads Blues Society and is a long standing blues lover. He is a retired Navy commander who served his entire career in nuclear submarines. In addition to working in his civilian career since 1996, he writes for and publishes the bi-monthly newsletter for Crossroads, chairs their music festival and works with their Blues In The Schools program. He resides in Byron, IL.

