

Backtrack Blues Band

“Way Back Home”

Harpo Records

www.backtrackbluesband.com

The Backtrack Blues Band has been a regional treasure in the Tampa Bay area performing original blues since 1980. Possessing a tough electric sound reminiscent of the early Chicago blues scene they are getting off that backtrack and stepping up to the national scene with their latest release “Way Back Home.” Led by long time vocalist and harp master Sonny Charles with a rhythm section of Little Johnny Walter on rhythm guitar, Stick Davis bass and Joe Bencomo drums, and the newest member of the band is hot young guitar slinger Kid Royal. Plus for this session they’ve added Florida piano heavyweight Victor Wainwright with backing vocals by Latonya Oliver & Dana Merriwether. Six of the ten tracks are Sonny Charles originals but have a quintessential sound of blues standards that can stand toe to toe with the classics.

Showing their tropical roots Backtrack turns the classic “Going To Chicago” into “Goin’ To Eleuthera” an island in the Bahamas cause “those Caribbean woman are the friendliest around.”

The harp and vocals blast out a churning delivery for “Tell Your Daddy” till Royal reigns full swing before the harp takes back control and drives it home. A chorus of sweetly crooning female vocals back up Sonny for every mention of “Heavy Built Woman” with the Kid adding some sprightly guitar and Sonny channels Ellington on the harp riff and they give a tip of the hat to Guitar Slim on “Shoot My Rooster.” The harp references “Walking by Myself” on “Rich Man Blues” singing “If one man takes it all ain’t nothing left for you and me.” Working with the basic “Help Me” riff “Help Me Just This Time” doles out a hefty dose of blues. Trying their hand at two Sonny Boy Williamson tunes “Your Funeral, My Trial” is given a traditional reading with Charles emulating the Williamson harp sound while keeping the vocals all his own then “Checkin’ On My Baby” takes full flight on this traditional tour de force, when the harp and guitar are in sync it’s spine chilling. “Baby Please Don’t Go” is a classic tune done with a hard rocking attitude and original solos and Backtrack makes the Little Walter hit “Nobody But You” their own without losing any of its intensity.

The Backtrack Blues Band’s “Way Back Home” is right on track with some cool contemporary blues that really knows it’s roots.—**Roger & Margaret White**