

Backtrack Blues Band

Make My Home In Florida

Harpo Records backtrackbluesband.com

Backtrack Blues Band, do as the title of their newest CD proclaims "*Make My Home In Florida*" and for a band that's been on the scene for almost thirty years they reveal a real rejuvenation. When a group of seasoned bluesmen Sonny Charles harmonica and vocals, Little Johnny Walter rhythm guitar, Joe Bencomo drums and Stick Davis bass recruited a hot young guitarist Kid Royal to play a mix of originals and classics it was a partnership made in paradise. With the success of last years "Way Back Home" CD they quickly enlisted a sound and video team to record that spark before a sold out crowd at the historic Palladium Theater in St. Pete for a deluxe CD/DVD set of tough electric blues captured live. The DVD reveals a band that's still on the edge, the original players gathered together all dressed in dark suits ready for business, the upstart Kid to the left wearing a casual newsy cap, a white shirt, sleeves rolled up for action, primed to deliver an energetic set.

They deliver from the first notes of Sonny's harp on Sonny Boy Williamson's "Checkin' On My Baby" taking full flight as the Kid burns on this tour de force then keeping in a blues vein Charles emulates the Williamson harp sound while keeping the vocals all his own on Sonny Boy's "Your Funeral And My Trail." From there Sonny Charles calls for a B.B. King tribute and Kid Royal swings into "Woke Up This Morning" supplying vocals, Charles riffs on harp as Royal nails a tasteful solo. Sonny asks, "remember that T-Bone Walker tune you were playing?" as the Kid takes up a "T-Bone Shuffle" the harp swings, the Kid sings and burns on guitar. For a final cover the band rips into Little Walter's "Nobody But You" the rhythm section is hitting hard against Sonny's clipped vocals while the interplay of guitar and harp is dynamic. Jacking into a heavy groove the band kicks off their originals chanting with every mention of "Heavy Built Woman" as the Kid adds some sprightly guitar and Sonny channels Ellington horns on the harp riff, then the harp crows and cackles on "Shoot My Rooster" and Royal gives a tip of the hat to Guitar Slim. On the title tune "*Make My Home In Florida*" Sonny's vocals have a lazy Southern swagger and guitar lines so fluid they're practically dripping and they're well recieved by the local crowd. Finishing out their originals 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 for a finale.

The Backtrack Blues Band have stepped up their game on "*Make My Home In Florida*" with it's duel CD/DVD and as they say, cut them while they're hot. —**Roger & Margaret White**