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Christopher Wyze & The Tellers – *Live In Clarksdale* – Big Radio Records BGR 1002

A Wise Blues Fan Will Seek This One For Their Personal Collection

Released on April 18th, this new CD+DVD “live” October, 2024 performance captured in Clarksdale, Mississippi is a real treat for blues fans everywhere! What a generous collection in offering the performance via both mediums! In addition to the ten outstanding selections from the show, two separate video features supplement the performance items; the “live” show itself, plus a very interesting 50-minute documentary where Wyze takes all on a journey into all facets of Clarksdale’s rich blues history.

This is the outfit’s second offering for the Big Radio Records imprint (the first being entitled *Stuck In The Mud*) and finds a band of veteran bluesmen whose rise in the awareness of blues fans is astounding. To many, it’s like they came out of nowhere. Clarksdale’s Juke Joint Chapel at the Shack Up Inn was the site of the tremendous show memorialized here and, across the breadth of the 42-minute presentation, Wyze and his blues co-collaborators demonstrate awe-inspiring individual and collective musical proficiencies that make one scratch their head proclaiming, “Where have these guys been and why am I not conscious of them?”

This is terrific blues musicking, with Wyze’s strong vocals (and when I say “strong” I mean authoritative and convincing) and efficient harmonica leading the blues charge while John Boyle’s lofty guitar competencies surge and drive, with Gerry Murphy’s firm and unflinching low-end bass works idyllically framing the proceedings, while Douglas Banks’ drumming slams home rock-solid rhythms, and Mark Yacovone’s perfect keyboard runs providing assured swagger. A duo of backing vocalists, Ralph Carter and Irene Smits, provide a fine touch of complementary and strident singing.

The set’s closer, “Nobody Knows You When You’re Down And Out,” the timeless Jimmie Cox song that Wyze references to Scrapper Blackwell, supremely closes this collection.

Hopefully, this superlative effort brings the rightful recognition Christopher Wyze & The Tellers deserve. Bravo, boys! This is great blues by a group that knows how to deliver the goods! The link to the band’s web site can be found below.