

BIG BLUES REVIEWS

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CRISTOPHER WYZE AND THE TELLERS

DVD - LIVE IN
CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI

AT THE SHACK UP INN

Apart from the album, Live In Clarksdale, two very interesting things make this a must-have package: a wonderful DVD highlighting the band's performance at the Shack Up Inn, and a documentary that gives you a birds-eye view of the town of Clarksdale. But, for this issue, let's concentrate on the live performance at the juke joint. Joining Christopher (Vocals and Harmonica) are John Boyle (Electric Guitar and Slide Guitar), Gerry Murphy (Bass), Mark Yacovone (Keys), and Douglas Banks (Drums). For me, this is my dream kind of gig. I have yet to experience a gig in a real juke joint, especially in Clarksdale, but this is what I always imagined it would be. The atmosphere is brilliant, you can feel it oozing out of the walls and floorboards, the walls decorated with historical memorabilia from near and far. So, to the gig, Three Hours From Memphis opens the proceedings with no place to hide, forget about all those 20,000 seater arenas, stadium gigs and the like, get down to the Shack Up Inn and witness bands such as these guys. Money Spent Blues probably sums up most of the history of Blues music; the title itself does the explaining. Stuck In The Mud brings to the stage Irene Smits



on backing vocals. Aside from the dulcet tones of Chris Wyze, her harmonies are nothing short of exquisite. Songs like, Cotton Ain't King and Good Friend Gone are two of the best Blues songs I've heard in many a while. That's the beauty of this whole package: it introduces you to things that, for some reason, may have passed you by. There are a couple of covers that end the evening's proceedings, the first is a cover of the Scrapper Blackwell tune, How Long, How Long Blues. Chris explains part of the reason behind the choice, Blackwell originated from Indiana, as does Chris Wyze. The final song, Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out has been covered by more people than I care to imagine, all great renditions. This version is slightly different, it's almost delivered at half the normal speed of the others and the original. I've honestly not heard it done like this before. The DVD is a must-see, a brilliant band in a wonderful setting, you can almost feel the soil and all it contains; this is how you play the Blues.

STEPHEN HARRISON