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Christopher Wyze & the Tellers – LIVE in CLARKSDALE (CD+DVD)

For about 20 years, CHRISTOPHER WYZE has been active as a singer-songwriter/harpist from Indianapolis. Born and raised in the southern hills of Indiana, his music is heavily influenced by his time in the Mississippi Delta. Recently, this storyteller was named a "One to Watch" songwriter by the Nashville Songwriters Association International.

Wyze debuted in 2024 with the Tellers and the album 'Stuck in the Mud,' featuring 13 bluesinfused original songs recorded in Muscle Shoals (AL) and Clarksdale (MS). Ralph Carter produced and co-wrote eight of the songs. The tracklist blends rock and roll, Americana, and country styles, merging with Wyze's distinctive deep voice and storytelling style. His songs flow through themes of experiences, humanity, and hope, without shying away from darker corners.

The follow-up album, also released on Big Radio Records (Johnny Phillips' label), is titled 'LIVE IN CLARKSDALE.' It was filmed and recorded live at the Juke Joint Chapel in the famous Shack Up Inn in Clarksdale, Mississippi. It includes 8 hit singles from the band plus 2 blues classics from the 1920s by Leroy Carr/Jimmy Cox - Scrapper Blackwell: the very bluesy "How Long, How Long Blues" and "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out." The video is a 50-minute documentary "WYZE in CLARKSDALE," offering a look in and around Clarksdale, presented and produced by Christopher Wyze. The musicians accompanying Wyze (vocals, harmonica) were John Boyle (electric + slide guitar), Gerry Murphy on bass, Mark Yacovone (keys), Englishman Douglas Banks on drums, Ralph Carter (percussion) & Irene Smits (background vocals).

The eight original songs all come from the debut album, 'Back to Clarksdale,' where Wyze takes us to "his" musical oasis in the title track and "Back to Clarksdale." The stomping opener, "Three Hours from Memphis," is a fictional tale of a musician seeking fame, inspired by his own hopes and dreams. Other songs showcase his rich imagination, from the quirky "Money Spent Blues" and "Looking for My Baby" featuring Yacovone on piano, to "Hard Work Don't Pay," a harmonica-heavy track. Wyze's harmonica also leads on "Cotton Ain't King," a song about the Delta cotton fields where the blues was born: "Cotton ain't king, Blues is the king...". The infectious midtempo "Good Friend Gone" with excellent slide guitar by Boyle tells another story of his early life and a friend who fell into bad company. 'Live in Clarksdale' confirms the qualities we highly regard of Christopher Wyze & The Tellers once again!

Eric Schuurmans