

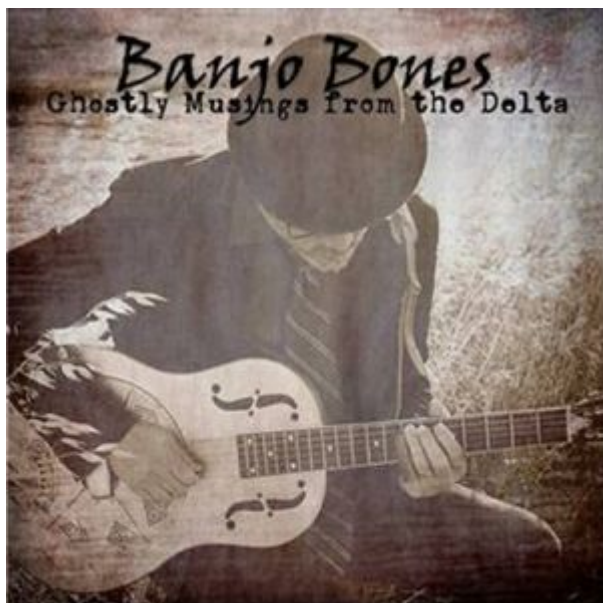
BLUESBLAST

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M A G A Z I N E



SUGAR RAY NORCIA
The Real, Real Deal



Banjo Bones – *Ghostly Musings from the Delta*

Boneyard Records

<https://banjobones.com/>

10 tracks

I had hopes for this being a cool blues CD with some great National Steel Guitar work. I usually don't read the liner notes until I listen to the CD through for the first time but by the second and third song he made me stop and read them.

Bones tells us he does not play his resonator enough but he was requested to do some tunes as a guest on his friend's show. He says he uses the guitar at his recording sessions as an inspiration to hearken back to write songs like the old Mississippi Delta blues singers of the 1930s and 1940s so he practiced on the National Steel guitar. OK so far, but then Bones states, "I am not a bluesman,

and this is not a blues record." That's what made me stop and read the notes because what I was hearing is not a blues record.

So I hoped the influence would rub of a bit on some of the songs. Perhaps. The resonator sound is unique, but the vocal work and songs are not blues, and per the liner notes they were not intended to be.

The CD starts with "Awakening," a short intro that starts churchy and then adds resonator. Not really blues but interesting. "Dangerous Game" and "Rabbit Hole" offer up vocals that are metered and clipped and enhanced. The sound is out there on it's own, in a genre I've not really been able to put a finger on. It's as if punk rock meets alternative rock, performance art, and Americana and uses a resonator guitar to make the sound even more varied. The vocal echo effects and delivery are paced and deliberately sing song and rhythmic. "Tale of an Outcast" swerves with a little slow rockabilly groove and the odd vocals, but it continues in the vein of mixed, odd genres. "The Sermon" mixes acoustic guitar and fiddle to offer up some down home sounds. The vocals are grittier and dirtier here, making for an interesting mix. I enjoyed this cut and it's throbbing approach which was more natural.

"Picking Up The Slack" is an American a offshoot with the rhythmic vocals coming back and so is "Snowy Mountain Revisited." The former is more like the first songs but the latter is dark and haunting. Next is "The Guilt Trip" which opens with some nice six string work. The dark vocals begin again showing repressed anger at first and then out and out anger as Bones sings of a former love. A work song follows entitled "Long John," a real throw back and shout out to early blues. This was quite interesting with simple guitar work, percussion and interesting call response vocal.

"Hbd2u" takes us out in 44 seconds of solo guitar playing "Happy Birthday To You" with old time record noise overlaid. Interesting? Maybe. Weird? For sure, but it kinda fits with everything else.

Banjo Bones does the Four and Six String work, vocals, drum programming and percussion. Giorgi Khokhobashvili is on violins and Annie Eldorado does a backing vocal on "Snowy Mountain." A sparse lineup for an album that bounces around genres and gives us a different spin on music that most blues fans will find more than a little different.

It's not blues, it's not intended to be blues. This is something completely different. If that's what you have in mind for a CD buy, you'll find it here.

Reviewer Steve Jones is president of the Crossroads Blues Society and is a long standing blues lover. He is a retired Navy commander who served his entire career in nuclear submarines. In addition to working in his civilian career since 1996, he writes for and publishes the bi-monthly newsletter for Crossroads, chairs their music festival and works with their Blues In The Schools program. He resides in Byron, IL.