

John Primer - Blue Steel: A Tribute to Elmore James (2003)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Shake Your Moneymaker* 02:04 02. *It Hurts Me Too* 04:20 03. *Sunnyland Train* 03:01
04. *Too Much* 05:56 05. *I'm In Love* 04:02 06. *Can't Stop Loving* 02:23 07. *Since My Baby Left
This Town* 05:23 08. *I'm A Blues Man* 06:02 09. *I'm Worried* 04:39 10. *1839* 03:17 11. *Fine
Little Mama* 02:37 12. *I Held My Baby* 03:23 13. *I Had A Dream Last Night* 05:18 14. *Stranger
Blues* 03:26 John Primer — Guitar, Vocals Bo Trisko — Rhythm Guitar, Weissenborn
Steve Bell — Harmonica Detroit Junior — Piano Michael Morrison — Bass Mark Diffenderffer
— Drums Little Bobby Neely — Saxophone

The highlight of any John Primer show is when he pulls out the bottleneck and uses it to vivaciously perform ripping and pumping slide guitar. On *Blue Steel* you can experience his enthusiastic slide for 56 minutes via 14 staple cuts which are mostly short and sweet. Appropriately, most of them are Elmore James classics but Primer sneaks in 3 of his own on the self-produced CD. After a very brief (one release) stint with Telarc, Primer returns on Wolf Records. Shaped under the pressure of backing greats like Muddy Waters and Magic Slim, Primer is a modern day traditional electric Chicago blues master. He has played with the best of them and now he is one of them. Backed by regular touring members of his Real Deal Blues Band (Bo Trisko rhythm guitar, Michael Morrison bass and Mark Diffenderffer drums), John works his listeners into a blues trance. *Shake Yo Moneymaker* is played the way it was intended. Here (and throughout), a completely revitalized Detroit Junior comes alive on the piano and performs like a man half his age. On *Sunnyland Train*, John's guitar sounds just like a charging locomotive clicking and clacking down the track. Experience real deal blues on *Too Much*. Forget about the tribute and sit back and enjoy a brilliant blues tune where Steve Bell's harp sounds like it is going to split in two. Little Bobby Neely's saxophone creates an atmosphere of the era these songs are originally from on *I'm In Love*. *Can't Stop Loving* is up-tempo and bouncing with Bo on lap steel guitar. Here, ballroom dancers will be in their glory. You will not want the infectious rhythm of *Stranger Blues* to stop. *I'm A Bluesman* was written and is performed by someone who is truly qualified to write and sing the blues, Mr. John Primer. On lyrics like 'I was born with the blues and I haven't had enough of the blues yet' and 'blues gave me a feeling that can't be beat', John's strong, confident voice has as much conviction as a preacher. Ironically, this song and *1839* were recorded with completely different musicians

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(including Magic Slim) and these tunes are two of the disc's best.

Many tribute discs don't work. This is one that does thanks to the genuine homage from one of today's blues experts to one of yesteryear's – both originally from Mississippi. Primer is quoted from Lisa Becker and Bo Trisko's fantastic liner notes, 'I wanted Elmore to be recognized for the incredible impact he had on all of us . a new generation will be exposed to Elmore, keeping his style alive.' Primer seems to have made a personal musical ambition to bring the older blues traditions to a wider, modern audience. Blue Steel contains authentic down home blues and magnificent slide which the larger labels avoid. Sure, some of the more common riffs are repeated once too often. However, Primer proves himself a blues slide guitar aficionado. This is old-style blues we can NOT afford to lose. ---

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