

Sean Costello - Cuttin' In (2000)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Talk To Your Daughter* 5:17 2 *Cuttin' In* 2:51 3 *Cold Cold Ground* 3:09 4 *Mellow Chick Swing* 2:08 5 *I Want To Be Loved* 2:19 6 *Who's Been Cheatin' Who* 2:48 7 *Double Trouble* 7:34 8 *Jumpin' Salty* 2:16 9 *Goombay Rock* 3:30 10 *I Got Loaded* 2:52 11 *Those Lonely Lonely Nights* 2:40 12 *Close To You* 4:11 13 *Rub-A-Dub* 4:02 14 *Ah'W Baby* 3:59 Bass – Melvin Zachary Double Bass – Dave Roth (tracks: 4, 13) Drums – Bill Edwards (tracks: 5, 8, 10, 11, 14), Tim Gunther Guitar – Sean Costello Harmonica – Paul Linden Organ – Neau Wauchope Percussion – Chris Uhler Piano – Matt Wauchope, Paul Linden (tracks: 3, 8) Vocals – Paul Linden (tracks: 14), Sean Costello

This is Costello's second solo album, his first since his appearance on Susan Tedeschi's hit CD *Just Won't Burn*. Costello is only 20 years old, but his guitar work is in a completely different league from that of the other kid blues guitarists currently causing a fuss in bluesland. Costello comes from a remarkably well-informed place as a player. This is reflected not only in his guitar style, but also in the choice of material on *Cuttin' In*. He has a nice feel for jump blues, as we hear on his cover of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Mellow Chick Swing," and he can do the hard-edged Chicago blues with the requisite skill and fury -- check out his Butterfield-esque original "Who's Been Cheatin' Who." The R&B influence has not eluded Costello either -- his cover of Otis Rush's "Double Trouble" is handled with a soulful feel that belies his age. And Costello's not afraid to take a flyer, either, which brings us to the calypso funkiness of "Goombay Rock," a song worthy of the Squirrel Nut Zippers' attention. Costello the guitarist has snatched the key to the blues kingdom. His playing is shockingly deep for a 20-year-old. And his vocal work is nearly a match for his guitar chops; given time, that too will become very real. Of all the young blues lions out there brandishing their electric guitars, Costello is the one who's got his head and heart into the deep blues. ---Philip Van Vleck, AllMusic Review

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With Cuttin' In, 20-year-old Sean Costello serves up a retro-sounding release that includes gritty jump, raucous Chicago blues and funky New Orleans R&B, all done up with the know-how and agility of an artist twice Costello's age. Unfortunately, the tinny analog sound – obviously intended to lend a 1950s air to the proceedings - detracts somewhat from the music. Still, the production is not so bad that blues fans should ignore this album.

Costello first gained attention as the hot lead guitarist in Susan Tedeschi's band. He played on Tedeschi's smash album Just Won't Burn when he was just 18. Cuttin' In is actually Costello's second solo release, and the music here is so good I may have to track down his first album. Costello comes across as a well-rounded artist. He sings with emotional intensity, his guitar work is fiery, and his songwriting shows great promise. It's enough to make you forget about Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Jonny Lang.

The album includes some Chicago chestnuts (Willie Dixon's "I Want to Be Loved" and Otis Rush's "Double Trouble"), a few choice obscurities (including Junior Watson's "Cuttin' In"), as well as three Costello originals. The Chicago tunes bring to mind Muddy Waters' hard-rocking '70s band with Pinetop Perkins, Johnny Winter and Bob Margolin, while the R&B tunes are faithful to the Ace Records sound. Costello's original compositions reflect his knowledge of both blues and jump. In fact, this whole package is righteously raucous.

Granted, the covers don't deviate much from the original versions, but they're played with passion and skill, particularly J. B. Lenoir's boisterous "Talk to Your Daughter," Earl King's soulful classic "Those Lonely, Lonely Nights," and a neat version of Blind Blake's unusual calypso tune "Goombay Rock." ---Ed Kopp, allaboutjazz.com

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