

Root Doctor - New Attitude (Feat. Freddie Cunningham) (2013)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 12 April 2016 15:56 -

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01. *Rear View Sight* (3:25) 02. *Set Me Free* (5:23) 03. *Bring It Back* (3:53) 04. *Pay The Rent* (5:56) 05. *The Other Way* (4:19) 06. *Louisiana Bound* (3:27) 07. *You're Gonna Lose* (3:49) 08. *Baby, You're Bad* (5:32) 09. *Someone Else Is Steppin' In* (4:11) 10. *Land Of The Free* (4:04) Freddie Cunningham - lead vocals James Williams – bass Mike Skory – Hammond organ, keyboards, vocals Bill Malone – guitar, vocals Bobby Gardner – drums, vocals

If this, my first review of 2014, is any indication as to the quality of music I'll be working with this year then bring it on. Since 2006 this is Root Doctor's fifth release, and having all but the very first one, I do believe I'm qualified to say that "New Attitude" could very well be their best.

Although the band has had a few minor changes over the years, vocalist Freddie Cunningham and bassist James Williams seem to be the common denominators on all of the bands recordings. "New Attitude" features both of them along with: Mike Skory on keyboards; Bill Malone on guitar; and Bob Gardner on drums. Additional artist appearing on certain tracks include: Dave Matchette on harmonica; Mike Lynch on accordion; Andy Wilson on trumpet; Len`i Glenn on baritone sax; Jerrick Matthews & Michael Dease on trombone; Chad Bement on tenor sax; R. Gardner on washboard; and Lisa Bonotto & Glenn Brown on additional vocals.

"New Attitude" contains nine original tracks and a cover of a track that those of you who have seen the band live will recognize - Denise LaSalles, "Someone Else Is Steppin' In". "Rear View Sight" is the perfect opening track. It's well sung vocals, sharp rhythm, and outstanding guitar and keyboard leads do a perfect job of introducing the listener to the very talented nucleus of the band. It's also - and from what I'm hearing, I'm somewhat sad to say this - the only track that you get to hear the Dave Matchette's wonderful harp work.

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"Pay The Rent" is one of those soft blues numbers that allow the piano and percussion vibes to carry it over into a jazzy mood. It's that perfectly sung, perfectly played attention commanding type of song that other than the music itself, one should be able to hear a pin drop in the room. In spite of everyone putting on a flawless performance, I can't help but feel that it's Mike's piano playing that steals this one. By the way, back in the early nineties, Mike was one of the bands founding members but until returning in 2010, had not appeared on any of their first three releases. Welcome back, Mike!

"The Other Way" is just one of several tracks that establish why "Featuring Freddie Cunningham" deservedly appears after the bands name. If I'm a vocal instructor, this is mandatory listening for my students. Monster rhythm from James, Bob, Mike and the whole horn section and a few scorching sax and guitar leads by Chad and Bill make it a killer musically as well. Play this one LOUD and play this one OFTEN.

It took exactly one note of this track and I knew Root Doctor was "Louisiana Bound". Leading the way on the accordion, with lots of help from Bob on the drums, Mike's got the band in party mode and as soon as you hear it, this Zydeco grooves going to put you into dancing mode.

"Baby You're Bad" is the disc's slowest and truest blues track and that right there makes it one of my favorites. Torch style, soulful and heartfelt vocals, high end piano notes that just tickle your ear drums, slow, gritty guitar leads that make your gut wrench and rhythm that just causes you to settle back into one of those relaxed finger tapping trances. Oh, yeah! It just doesn't get any better than this.

Other outstanding tracks on this superior project include: "Set Me Free", "Bring It Back", "You're Gonna Lose", "Someone Else Is Steppin' In", and "Land Of The Free". With this years Blues Music Awards already in the hands of the voters, I'm going out on a limb and saying that in a year from now, you may very well see this band and this CD on the ballot. I've already noted it as a candidate for the 2014 Blewzzy's.

To get your hands on this must have disc, go see the guys at www.rootdoctorband.com. And you know the drill, you're going to tell them the Blewzzman sent you. ---Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro, rootdoctorband.com

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