

## Geoff Muldaur And The Texas Sheiks □ – Texas Sheiks (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Yellow Dog Blues* 3:00 2 *The World Is Going Wrong* 3:06 3 *All By Myself* 3:42 4 *Poor Boy* 3:00 5 *Fan It* 3:15 6 *Hard Time Killin' Floor* 4:19 7 *Sweet To Mama* 3:15 8 *Don't Sell It, Don't Give It Away* 2:33 9 *Cairo* 3:36 10 *Under The Chicken Tree* 3:09 11 *Please, Baby* 3:02 12 *Blues In The Bottle* 3:48 13 *Right Now Blues* 4:01 14 *Travellin' Riverside* 5:53 15 *Yellow Dog Blues (Reprise)* 2:54 Stephen Bruton - Guitar, Mandolin, Six String Banjo, Soloist Cindy Cashdollar - Dobro, Guitar (Steel), National Steel Guitar, Slide Guitar Floyd Domino - Piano Bruce Hughes - Bass (Upright), Guitar, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Geoff Muldaur - Guitar, Kazoo, Six String Banjo, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Johnny Nicholas - Banjo, Drums, Guitar, Harmonica, Mandolin, Six String Banjo, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Suzy Thompson - Accordion, Fiddle, Vocals (Background)

Muldaur's unique tone and phrasing are instantly recognizable, and like many musicians who came of age during the 1960s folk revival, he was making roots music before the term was invented. He's a fine blues singer and an inventive interpreter of folk, pop, ragtime, and jug band music, to name just a few of the genres he's put his stamp on. In 2008 his longtime friend Stephen Bruton, favorite guitarist of artists like Kris Kristofferson and Bonnie Raitt learned he had terminal cancer. Muldaur asked Bruton to join him in the studio for a project he was recording, a roots music super session that was going to explore the intersection of folk, blues, country, swing, ragtime, jug band, and mountain music. That said, it's ragtime and jug band music that most informs Muldaur's arrangements. Big Bill Broonzy's "All by Myself" gets a rollicking treatment with Muldaur's boozy lead vocal and tasty solos from Bruton's guitar, Cindy Cashdollar's dobro, and Floyd Domino's piano. "Fan It," a tune made popular by Bob Wills, features a saucy vocal from special guest Jim Kweskin, solid fiddle work by Suzy Thompson, and Cashdollar's jazzy pedal steel. "Sweet to Mama" harks back to the sound of early African-American string bands. Muldaur moans the blues and plays banjo with barebones backing by Thompson's fiddle and Bruce Hughes on standup bass. The surrealistic "Under the Chicken Tree" blends jug band, cowboy, and Hawaiian pop with a playful vocal from Kweskin, Muldaur on kazoo, Johnny Nicholas on mandolin, Cashdollar's dobro, and Kweskin playing banjo. "Blues in the Bottle" was one of the first tunes cut by the Kweskin Jug Band and Kweskin reprises his role from that early session with Bruton on mandolin, Cashdollar's dobro,

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Thompson's fiddle and Hughes on standup bass adding a big jazzy vibe to the take. Burton adds mandolin to the sinister blues numbers that end the set. "Travelin' Riverside" is a grim Robert Johnson (is there any other kind?) tune with Cashdollar's foreboding dobro and Nicholas' tortured guitar adding to the menacing atmosphere. W.C. Handy's "Yellow Dog Blues" gets an instrumental arrangement that suggests swing, ragtime and jug band music to take things out on a high note, Thompson's fiddle wailing like a preacher possessed by the Holy Spirit. Bruton passed shortly after these sessions, but the music lives on, sounding like a loose, freewheeling, front porch gathering of longtime friends. It's a fitting tribute to Bruton and another feather in Muldaur's cap, an excellent addition to his already impressive body of work.

---AllMusic Review

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