

Climax Blues Band - Broke Heart Blues (2015)

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1. *Blue Monday* 2. *Cruel* 3. *Gossip Is Gold* 4. *Miss You So* 5. *The Rubicon* 6. *Lonely Avenue* 7. *Gotta Get It Right* 8. *Bluesong* 9. *Broke Heart Blues* 10. *Miracle* 11. *I Feel So Blue* 12. *You Ain't Got The Right* 13. *Oxygen* 14. *Bluesong acoustic* Pete Haycock – vocals, guitar Robin George – vocals, guitar Mel Collins - sax Jacquie Williams - vocals Charley Charlesworth - bass Charlie Morgan - drums

Pete Haycock had experienced worldwide fame as part of the CLIMAX BLUES BAND and Robin George has enjoyed one of the most varied and successful careers as guitarist/singer/producer. Both had worked together on a charity project and the opportunity to make an album together to tour was not to be missed. The duo assembled in 2013 a cast of heritage musicians which resulted in *Broke Heart Blues*. Unfortunately, Pete died of heart failure aged 62 on October 2013 having just completed the album.

Climax Blues presents us with a rollicking album boasting 14 meaty tracks, some more bluesy, others more rocking, but all of them filled with an unmistakable trademark sound. With the added talent of Mel Collins on sax, Charley Charlesworth on bass, Charlie Morgan on drums, and Jacquie Williams on lead vocals, things could hardly go wrong! There's plenty to chew on here and fans will not be disappointed, courtesy of renowned mixing engineer Klaus Bohlmann.

Opening track "Blue Monday" offers some mean fare but it takes a while before we get down to the real business. "Cruel" is kick-ass blues "n" roll, especially where the sax is concerned that blasts through oh so cool.

Third track "Gossip Is Gold" is filtered through with heady and menacing riffs while the overall

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rhythm is punchy and jagged. "Miss You So" sports funky grooves and a harmony-layered chorus, the arrangement is benefitted by a real strong beat.

We go into groove with "The Rubicon", a track that features Jackie's vocals soaring above the band, and "there's no coming back when you cross the Rubicon". The mood ranges from bittersweet to fever-level, and Mel Collins coming in with a blazing sax leading up to a climactic rhythm finale. We even get a quote from William Congreve "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned".

"Lonely Avenue" has bluesy riffs from the outset yet an altogether more classic blues-rock sound. The melodious sax contrasts with stone-heavy riffs. We get a true rollicker with "Gotta Get It Right".

Title track "Broke Heart Blues" echoes in some respects elements of the Average White Band, albeit on tranquilizers but with considerable more depth. "Miracle" starts out like a dreamy rock ballad and the vocal teamwork is catchy and memorable. It's also a rather visual track that would make a good music video. Really great is the smooth sax fade-out. Jackie's vehicle comes next: "I Feel So Blue" is rich and soulful and highlights her fantastic vocal range. There is a change in pace when the blues-guitar kicks in with a extended solo.

A favorite track on the album is "You Ain't Got The Right", a real Delta-blues bottleneck affair - Mississippi Fred McDowell would have liked this one. Real powerfully performed, with Jackie once more delivering the goods and belting out with élan!

By contrast, "Oxygen" felt almost like an anti-climax. As for the two versions of "Bluesong" (the clue is in the title), it's easily the bluesiest track on the album and we are treated to two versions: the original version and the acoustic version, which is basically a showcase for highlighting the bands respective talents. --- music-news.com

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