Pinetop Perkins - Pinetop Perkins & Friends (2008)

1 - Take It Easy (with Jimmie Vaughan) - 3:12 2 - Got My Mojo Working (with Eric Sardinas) - 3:30 3 - Down In Mississippi (with B.B. King) - 3:56 4 - How Long Blues/Come Back Baby (with Eric Clapton & Nora Jean Bruso) - 5:22 5 - Hoochie Coochie Man (with Jimmy Vaughan) - 4:10 6 - Barefootin' - 3:06 7 - Look On Yonders Wall - 4:29 8 - Anna Lee (with Jimmie Vaughan) - 4:28 9 - Sweet Home Chicago (with Nora Jean Bruso) - 3:49 10 - Bad Luck Baby - 5:23 Eric Clapton - Guitar Paul Diethelm - Guitar, Guitar (Rhythm) Willie Kent - Bass B.B. King - Guitar, Vocals Larry Millas - Vocals (Background) Pinetop Perkins - Piano, Vocals Eric Sardinas - Guitar, Vocals Kester Smith - Drums Leon Smith & The Basics - Drums Bob Stroger - Bass Jimmie Vaughan - Guitar, Vocals Bill Willis - Organ (Hammond)

These superstar guest "friends" affairs can get awfully tiresome, but this one is better than most. It was recorded over a two and a half year period when the irrepressible Chicago blues and boogie pianist was 92-94 years old, yet he seems decades younger. The songs are generally Chicago blues standards such as "Got My Mojo Working," "Hoochie Coochie Man," "Look on Yonders Wall" and, Lord help us, "Sweet Home Chicago." Still, if anyone has earned the right to give these chestnuts another go-round it's Perkins. Even though he's played nearly all of them thousands of times, he's as enthusiastic and invigorated as if he'd just written these well-worn classics. The piano man is spry on the 88s, tinkling the ivories like he's half his age, especially on the jaunty "Take it Easy Baby," the lively opener. Even though producer Doug B. Nelson overdubbed many of the higher profile parts, the set sounds open and natural, avoiding the stiffness that usually results with projects such as this. Only Eric Clapton, Jimmie Vaughan, and B.B. King can be considered major stars with the rest of the "friends" lesser known blues stalwarts such as singer Nora Jean Brusco and bassist Willie Kent (Kent passed before this disc was finally released in June, 2008). Thankfully Perkins is in such bracing form that except for King, who trades quips with him on "Down in Mississippi," nobody overwhelms or even steals the spotlight from the album's star. On the slow blues "Anna Lee," Perkins sounds positively lascivious, but in a charming, non-threatening way. He's also inspired by "Hoochie Coochie Man," with Vaughan assisting, laughing at the end like a child. Hotshot slide guitarist Eric Sardinas redeems himself for his own over the top albums with zippy work here on "Barefootin'" and especially "Mojo..." Pinetop is so loose, upbeat, and cheerful for these sessions, you'd think

he had another 94 years left in him. --- Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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