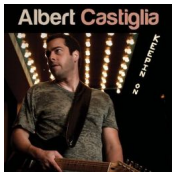
Albert Castiglia - Keeping On (2010)



01. Cadillac Assembly Line (Sir Mack Rice) 02. Till I Fell In Love With You (Bob Dylan) 03. Mojo 305 (Albert Castiglia, Steven Gaskell, Jerome Mascaro) play *04. Keep On Keepin' On (Albert Castiglia) 05. My Baby Is Now On My Mind (T-Bone Walker)*
play
06. Do You Love Me (Jack Fickel) 07. Could Not Ask For More (Peter Green) 08. Sweet Southern Angel (Albert Castiglia) with Toby Walker 09. Murderin' Blues (Robert Nighthawk) with Toby Walker 10. Goin Upstairs (John Lee Hooker) 11. Gettin' By (Albert Castiglia) 12. Closing Time (Albert Castiglia
Albert Castiglia (vocals, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, slide guitar); Toby Walker (dobro); Bill "Mighty" Quinn (piano, Hammond b-3 organ); Bob Amsell (drums); Emedin Rivera (congas); Nicole Hart (background vocals).

Albert Castiglia's been around long enough to understand the blues. Keepin' On is his fifth release, and the Miami-based guitarist used to tour with the late Junior Wells. He's certainly got chops to spare – Castiglia's fiery fretwork is intense but fluid, and he's inventive enough within the blues-rock power trio format.

And if power is what turns your crank, there's much to like about his latest. Castiglia approaches almost every tune with unbridled ferocity, moving from chunky rhythms to snarling leads with effortless ease. But subtlety and nuance are nowhere to be found, and in truth, despite a brief acoustic interlude that provides a bit of a respite, the net result is more tiring than satisfying.

The trouble is that Castiglia seems to have only one mood, regardless of the tune. Whether he's bemoaning the plight of the working man on "Keep On Keepin' On" or expressing thanks for the love of a good woman on Peter Green's "Could Not Ask For More," Castiglia's solos sound unrelentingly angry. And one gets the sense that the songs are simply vehicles for his six-string

excursions – musical exercise equipment, if you will – rather than stories to be told.

Castiglia shows good taste in covers, with a track from Bob Dylan (“Till I Fell In Love With You”) a menacing “Murdering Blues” from Robert Nighthawk, and lesser known tunes from T-Bone Walker (“My Baby Is Now On My Mind”) and John Lee Hooker (“Goin’ Upstairs”). But his approach remains monochromatic, with lots of notes that simply don’t seem to add up to much in the end.

Castiglia’s own band (bassist AJ Kelly and drummer Bob Amsel) is rounded out by a few guests, notably Bill ‘Mighty” Quinn on B3 and piano, dobro ace Toby Walker, and an uncredited turn on harmonica from Sandy Mack. All deliver fine performances, but apart from duets between Walker and Castiglia on “Sweet Southern Angel” and the aforementioned “Murderin’ Blues” (back to back, the two acoustic tunes provide a welcome break from the pedal-to-the-metal fireworks), they’re invariably overshadowed by Castiglia’s ferocious guitar.

Castiglia has talent, to be sure – apart from subtlety, his fretwork leaves nothing to be desired, and his vocals are more than adequate in context. But impressive guitar playing is just that - interesting to hear, but not terribly compelling in the long run. Castiglia makes a strong first impression, but his music is a bit like listening to someone who yells at full volume all the time. Here’s hoping he’ll pay more attention to the meaning of the tunes next time out, and temper his ferocity with a more nuanced approach that eschews athletics for actual expression … ---John Taylor, blogcritics.org

First, let me state this is a GREAT BLUES ALBUM. Now I can tell you a funny story. I was lying in bed reading a book and listening to Elwood Blues 'House of Blues' radio hour. It was the Best of 2010 year end countdown. So I was excited to hear what Elwood chose as his top 10. I am a blues loving man so I had heard songs 10 through 6 on the countdown, but as song 5 started, my brain froze, my ears literally turned my head to the radio and my jaw hit the floor,(okay pillow, I was reading in bed). What song is this, who's singing and who the efff is playing the guitar. It was a monster of a song and I just sat there enjoying it, something I haven't done since my older brother put on Thorogood's 'Move It On Over' and I stopped in my tracks to listen to 'The Sky Is Crying' Thorogood's version of the Elmore James song from 1978.

Albert Castiglia is a very good singer/songwriter and will only get better as the next albums come out. His Guitar Playing was phenomenal. He deserved to be on the Best of List with Buddy Guy, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Joe Bonamassa, Janiva Magness, Charlie Musselwhite and Kenny Wayne Shepherd. You must get this CD, we must start a (Ka-Steel-Ya) fan club. We must get this Blues Man to tour America, I live in California, so He has to bring his band to San Francisco and Oakland area. Please, Buy this album, pay for the mp3 downloads, go to his website and buy a t-shirt. My favorite song is 'Keep On Keepin' On', a song as relevant today as it ever will be. A fine balance between Castiglia written songs and cover versions make this a 5 star review. --- Brian Brady (Castro Valley, CA), amazon.com

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