Albert Castiglia – Up All Night (2017)

1 Hoodoo On Me 2 I Been Up All Night 3 Three Legged Dog 4 95 South 5 Knocked Down Loaded 6 Quit Your Bitching 7 Woman Don't Lie 8 Unhappy House Of Blues 9 Delilah 10 Chase Her Around The House 11 You Got Me To That Place
Bass – Jimmy Pritchard Blues Harp – Johnny Sansone Drums – Brian Menendez Guitar, Lead Vocals – Albert Castiglia Guitar, Vocals – Mike Zito Keyboards – Lewis Stephens Slide Guitar – Sonny Landreth

Guitarist Albert Castiglia made the trip to Dockside Studio in Maurice, La to record his latest project, once again pairing up with Mike Zito in the role of producer. Under Zito's guidance, Castiglia tightened up his sound on his last Ruf Records release, Big Dog, particularly with his vocals. The significant change on the new recording is the guitarist is backed by his touring band, featuring Jimmy Pritchard on bass and Brian Menendez on drums. Their presence creates a palpable comfort zone for the guitarist to operate in while presenting listeners with a true representation of the band's live sound.

The opening number, Zito's "Hoodoo On Me," has a pulsating bass line underneath Castiglia's stirring lament concerning a woman casting bewitching spells. His only recourse is to attempt an exorcism with the help of his guitar. "I Been Up All Night" finds the leader sitting at home with plenty of woman troubles, "….drinking strong black coffee, rolling joints as big around as my thumb." Menendez uses his cymbals to flavor Castiglia's wah-wah infused guitar forays. Noted Florida songwriter Graham Wood Drout contributed two originals, with "Three Legged Dog" being a hard-edged funky rocker while "Knock Down Loaded" has plenty of killer guitar licks.

The pace slows on "Quit Your Bitching," another one written by Zito, that finds Castiglia in no mood to listen to his woman's complaints. Lewis Stephens fleshes out the arrangement with embellishments on the organ. Another guest, Johnny Sansone, blows some fine harp on Cyril

Neville's "Unhappy House Of Blues," as Castiglia again finds himself in the midst of a another huge helping of relationship issues. So,naturally, he seeks relief and redemption through his guitar. "95 South" is a full-throttle, on-the-road rocker with Menendez providing the driving beat and Sonny Landreth using his slide guitar to supercharge the affair.

Sansone returns on "Delilah," a sprightly plea for a break from the telling effects of high living. Castiglia is in a randy mood after a long spell on the road, so he issues a rollicking warning about his homecoming plans on "Chase Her Around The House," his fiery guitar conveying the urgency of the situation. Zito adds backing vocals on the closer, a Pritchard original "You Got Me To That Place," and joins Castiglia on acoustic guitar for a stripped-down, infectious finale.

The only issue with the disc is the generic nature of some of the tracks. But once Castiglia and his crack rhythm section get going, there is no shortage of highlights. Zito once again shows that he has the knack for getting the best out of Castiglia. That is great news for listeners who want a whole lot of rock with their blues! ---Mark Thompson, bluesblastmagazine.com

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