

Snooky Pryor - Shake My Hand (1999)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Shake My Hand* 2:26 2 *Work With Me Annie* 4:16 3 *Someday Baby* 3:04 4 *Tomorrow Night* 2:47 5 *Telephone Blues* 4:30 6 *In This Mess* 3:33 7 *Pistol Packin' Mama* 3:13 8 *My Babe* 4:26 9 *Headed South* 5:40 10 *Jump For Joy* 3:31 11 *Don't Like To Brag* 4:40
Bass – Robert Stroger Drums – Jimmy Tilman Guitar – Billy Flynn Harmonica, Vocals – Snooky Pryor

Veteran harp man Pryor (who claims to be the first to amplify his harmonica) was still capable of some potent blues when he released this album in early 1999. Kicking off with a solo version of Faye Adams' "Shake a Hand" (its lyrics reworked heavily into the title track) that owes a huge debt to idol Sonny Boy Williamson II, Pryor settles into a comfortable groove with a tight little trio behind him consisting of Bob Stroger on bass, Billy Flynn on guitar and Jimmy Tilman on drums. His version of Hank Ballard's "Annie Had a Baby" is so radically different that it almost qualifies as an original, while his covers of Al Dexter's "Pistol Packin' Mama" and Sleepy John Estes' "Someday Baby" stay closer to the originals. The rest of the set features Snooky's great originals, with the minor-keyed "Headed South," "In This Mess," "Jump for Joy" and a nice remake of his "Telephone Blues" being particular standouts. Simple, no-frills production makes this a modern-day blues album that delivers the wallop of the old singles. ---Cub Koda, AllMusic Review

Veteran harpist Snooky Pryor, a pioneer of the amplified harmonica in post-war Chicago, blows with rough authority on *Shake My Hand* (Blind Pig 5050; 42:38). The title track is a stark, powerfully affecting unaccompanied number that showcases Snooky testifying on vocals and harp. A no-nonsense, understated rhythm section joins him on Chicago style versions of Hank Ballard "Work With Me Annie," "Pistol Packin' Mama" and the boogie woogie "Tomorrow Night."

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They reprise Pryor's own slow blues classic "Telephone Blues" and his engaging "In This Mess Up To My Chest," the title track of an earlier album on the Antone label. And on the instrumental "Jump for Joy" Snooky proves that, at age 77, he can still rock. Raggedy...in a good way. ---Bill Milkowski, jazztimes.com

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