Leslie West - Blue Me (2006)



01. Blues Before Sunrise(Leroy Carr) 4:33 02. I Woke Up This Morning(Graham Barnes) 4:35 03. Four Day Creep(Ida Cox) 3:18 04. Hit The Road Jack(Percy Mayfield) 3:44 05. Standin' Around Crying(Muddy Waters) 6:38 06. One Thing On My Mind(Sammy Hagar/Ronnie Montrose) 3:52 07. Green River(John C. Fogerty) 3:54 08. Sinner's Prayer(Lowell Fulson, Lloyd C Glenn) 6:31 09. Woman(Andy Fraser, Poul Rogers) 4:07 10. Tore Down(Sonny Thompson) 3:30 11. Summertime(Geprge Gershwin) 7:09 Bass – Tim Fahey Drums – Aynsley Dunbar Guitar, Vocals – Leslie West Organ [Hammond] – Art Groom Piano – Brian Mitchell Rhythm Guitar – Kevin Curry

Leslie West isn't a particularly innovative guitarist, and his style and approach have barely moved an eyelash since he first broke into the public consciousness with Mountain back in the early '70s, but boy can this guy get tone! West still sings with a gear-shredding roar and his guitar lines sound heavier than plutonium on this set of blues-rockers, and if he doesn't exactly do anything that he hasn't done before, his laser-on-steroids precision as a guitar player is still undeniable and when he gets cranking, it's guaranteed to blow the dust out of the eaves. That said, the most striking tracks here are the ones where he throttles things down just a hair. The opener, a version of Leroy Carr's classic "Blues Before Sunrise," is huge sounding without letting that overwhelm the song, while West's take on Percy Mayfield's "Hit the Road Jack" (best known in the Ray Charles version) is relatively sleek and elegant. The rendition of the Gershwins' "Summertime" that closes the set is plenty moody, with West's guitar weeping like the proverbial willow tree. He works the distinctive riff of John Fogerty's "Green River" for all it will give, turning this slice of faux swamp rock into a muscular monster ready to eat the whole bayou. These are the high points. Elsewhere, when the thunder and lightning of West's guitar lines die down, you're left with fairly rote arrangements of songs that seem essentially interchangeable. West's fans will get exactly what they expect with Blue Me, which means that West is doing his job, but there really isn't anything here that wasn't already in the first 20 seconds of "Mississippi Queen" when it hit the airwaves some 30-plus years ago. ---Steve Leggett, allmusic.com

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