

Johnny Tucker - Seven Day Blues (2018)

Written by bluesever
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1 *Talkin Bout You Baby* (2:16) 2 *Tired Of Doing Nothing* (4:04) 3 *Why Do You Let Me Down So Hard* (4:14) 4 *Love And Appreciation (To Georgia)* (2:36) 5 *Seven Day Blues* (3:56) 6 *Come On Home With Me* (3:01) 7 *Tell You All* (3:31) 8 *Something I Want To Tell You* (3:53) 9 *Gonna Give You One More Chance* (4:19) 10 *I Want To Do It* (3:38) 11 *Do Right Man* (3:40) 12 *One Of These Days* (5:19) 13 *I Can't Wait* (3:21) 14 *Listen Everybody* (3:35) 15 *You Can Leave My House* (5:38) Johnny Tucker - vocals Big John Atkinson - guitar Troy Sandow - guitar, harmonica Bob Corritore - harmonica Kid Ramos - guitar Bob Welch - organ Scott Smart - bass Malachi Johnson - drums Marty Dodson - drums

It is something of a mystery why Johnny Tucker isn't better known. He has been making music professionally since he first moved to Los Angeles back in 1964, singing in a James Brown tribute act before joining Philip Walker's band as the drummer before moving on to play with the likes of Johnny Otis, Floyd Dixon and Robert Cray. His first album for HighJohn Records, *Why You Lookin' At Me?*, was released in 2006, the same year as the wonderful *Floyd Dixon Celebration, Time Brings About A Change*. Tucker turns in engaging performances on both the CD and the DVD recordings of the two-night gig held to honour the legendary pianist and singer. He is a talented singer, with a warm, rough-hewn voice that straddles the border of blues and soul, as well as being a sharp-witted songwriter – all 15 tracks on *Seven Day Blues* were composed by him.

For his long-overdue second album on HighJohn, label chief Bob Auerbach put the singer together with Big Jon Atkinson and a hand-selected band of musicians. The tactic of pairing a veteran singer with younger acolytes doesn't always work, especially when the backing musicians overwhelm the singer they are meant to support (viz, *The Howlin' Wolf Album*). But when it does work, on albums like Nappy Brown's 2007 *Long Time Coming* (with superb support from Sean Costello) or on Muddy's 1977 *Hard Again*, the results are magical, with the authority and maturity of the older singer given a shot of the energy and excitement of youth.

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Seven Day Blues is very much in this latter category.

The core band comprises Atkinson and Scott Smart (who play both guitars and bass on different tracks), Troy Sandow on harmonica and bass, and Malachi Johnson and Marty Dodson and drums. Bob Welch contributes organ to the Sam Cooke-styled soul of “Love And Appreciation (To Georgia)” and the jump blues of “Tell You All”, which also features the guitar talents of Kid Ramos. Bob Corritore also contributes harp to five tracks. From the opening Howlin’ Wolf-esque, “Talkin’ About You Baby”, it’s obvious that the musicians understand how to bring the best out of Tucker’s voice. They know when to step forwards for their solo spots, but they never get in the way of the song.

Each song on the album was recorded live at Atkinson’s BigTone Studio in Hayward, CA, with all the players in one room, playing vintage gear and recorded on vintage equipment, and this commitment to authenticity comes through on every track. From the uptown Chicago shuffle of “Tired Of Doing Nothing” to the aching slow blues of the closing “You Can Leave My House”, via the primeval funk of the title track and the echo-drenched slide of “Do-Right Man”, each song reeks of deep emotion and well as a true understanding and appreciation of the way music used to be made.

Packing 15 songs into 57 minutes, there is no room for filler or fat on Seven Day Blues. Indeed, whilst it is dangerously presumptive to make predictions in January, it is not foolhardy to suggest that Seven Day Blues is an early contender for one of the albums of the year.

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