

The Nighthawks - Pain & Paradise (1996)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 30 September 2013 16:11 -

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01. Trouble Comin' Every Day 02. Shade Tree Mechanic 03. Same Thing 04. The Soul of a Man 05. High Temperature 06. Pain & Paradise 07. Is Love Enough 08. Trouble on the Way 09. I Told You So 10. Snap It Musicians: Mark Wenner (vocals, harmonica); Peter Kanaras (guitar); Steuart Smith (keyboards); Jan Zukowski (bass, background vocals); + The Orioles (background vocals)

The Nighthawks' history is extensive, beginning in the '70s when the band criss-crossed the country playing clubs and colleges then dominated by the sounds of country rock and disco. The band spread their version of roots rock, soul, and rockabilly and blues that was hardly the standard fare. In addition The Nighthawks were considered touring pioneers, since only a handful of Chicago blues stars were touring nationally, and the west coast blues bands stayed on their side of the Great Divide.

The Nighthawks continued to perform through-out the country, when in 1986 they performed their hugely successful "Farewell-For-Now-Tour". After long-timer Jim Thackery departed for a solo career and short-timer Greg Wetzel returned to Nashville, The Nighthawks stopped just long enough to catch their breath. They reformed a few times over the next several years while continuing to tour relentlessly. The first line-up featured Jimmy Hall (lead vocals and saxophone and harp) and Jimmy Nalls (lead guitar and back-up vocals) and lasted through 1990. When those two left, Danny Morris (lead guitar and vocals) and Mike Cowen (keyboards and back-up vocals) joined the group. In 1992, Mike left the group to go to college and at the end of 1994 Danny left to pursue a solo career. Thereafter, Pete Kanaras joined the band in January of 1995 and continues with the band to this date.

Over the years the Nighthawks acquired a reputation as a solid back-up band. The band helped attract great Chicago blues artists to Washington, D.C., and gained national respect as the

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backing band or support act for Muddy Waters, Otis Rush, Big Walter Horton and other legends. In addition, Jan, Pete and Mark went on a series of tours with Elvin Bishop and participated in the Rosebud Agency's blues all-star tours, which combined such illustrious front men as Pinetop Perkins, John Hammond, Charlie Musselwhite and John Lee Hooker. The list of guitarists the band collaborated with reads like a Who's Who of great pickers including Bob Margolin, Steuard Smith, Warren Haynes, James Solberg, Pete Kennedy, Phil Petroff and Ratso.

Touring and recording for three decades, The Nighthawks have certainly gained cult standing on the east coast where fans, who regard them as "The World's Greatest Bar Band," loyally follow them from show to show and are eagerly anticipating the release of Still Wild.

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