Toronzo Cannon - The Chicago Way (2016)



01. The Pain Around Me - 4:45 02. Bad Contract - 3:50 03. Walk It Off - 5:54 04. Fine Seasoned Woman - 3:29 05. Jealous Love - 4:27 06. Midlife Crisis - 4:09 07. Chickens Comin' Home To Roost - 5:15 08. Strength To Survive - 5:28 09. When Will You Tell Him About Me? - 4:29 10. Mrs. From Mississippi - 4:18 11. I Am - 5:25 Toronzo Cannon - Composer, Guitars, Producer, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Blaise Barton - Mixing, Percussion Brother John Kattke - Horn Arrangements, Keyboards, Organ (Hammond), Piano Melvin "Pookie Stix" Carlisle -Drums Robert Collazo - Sax (Baritone) Doug Corcoran - Trumpet Steve Eisen - Sax (Tenor) Pete Galanis - Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric) Melon "Honeydew" Lewis - Vocals (Background) Larry Williams – Bass

Chicago born and bred blues guitarist/singer/songwriter Toronzo Cannon keeps the city's blues flame blazing with The Chicago Way. Playing all self-penned material, Toronzo's lyrics sting just as hard as his fretwork, and his singing resonates instantly with a gruff soulfulness that begs for repeated listening. From frisky shuffles and hard blues to buttery ballads and funky R&B, Toronzo Cannon blends all flavors of Chicago blues and makes them his own. "Deep, contemporary Chicago blues...razor-sharp guitar and compelling, forceful singing" ---Chicago Tribune, alligator.com

At a time when people wonder if the blues is finally dead, Alligator keeps finding and recording the next generation of young blues greats. In recent years, they have given us young guitar slingers like Selwyn Birchwood and Jarekus Singleton. And now another guitarist closer to home, Toronzo Cannon. The Chicago Way marks the Alligator debut of the next great bluesman.

Besides New Orleans, there is no roots live music scene in this country as competitive as Chicago. And Cannon has been working the clubs for 15 years while driving a Chicago Transit Authority bus by day. He didn't pick up a guitar until he was 22. But he grew up in one of the roughest neighborhood in America near the infamous Robert Taylor Homes and as a kid he would stand outside the famous Theresa's Lounge, soaking up the blues of Junior Wells and Buddy Guy. By 28, he was working as a sideman for other artists, honing his craft as a searing left hand guitarist.

On The Chicago Way you can see the emergence of a soulful singer and first class storyteller. The album consists of 11 Cannon originals. Cannon does not just recycle what electric blues has been doing for 80 years. He writes about what he sees and tells stories of common experiences in uncommon ways. Stories about real people. And then there is the powerhouse last track entitled "I Am" which is one of the strongest, most hypnotic songs written in years. A song that transcends the blues. It is just a perfect song.

Toronzo Cannon proves that the blues is alive and well in the 21st century. This is not the 12th million version of "Sweet Home Chicago." Toronzo sings and writes about real life on the streets. Kudos once again to the great job being done by Alligator and its head, Bruce Iglauer.
---Tom Callahan, blurtonline.com

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