

Toronzo Cannon - Leaving Mood (2011)

Written by bluesever

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01. *She Loved Me* — 3:45 02. *Chico's Song* — 4:03 03. *Come Home* — 3:36 04. *I Believe* — 5:07 05. *Hard Luck* — 5:32 06. *Open Letter (To Whom It May Concern)* — 4:14 07. *I Can't Take Her Nowhere* — 4:14 08. *Leaving Mood* — 3:39 09. *She's Too Much* — 3:53 10. *You're A Good Woman* — 4:11 11. *Earnestine* — 3:30 12. *Do I Move You?* — 3:51 13. *Can't Hold Out* — 4:20 14. *Not Gonna Worry* — 5:37

Toronzo Cannon - Guitar, Producer, Vocals
Marty Binder - Drums
Lawrence Gladney - Guitar (Rhythm)
Roosevelt Purifoy - Fender Rhodes, Organ, Piano
Matthew Skoller - Harmonica
Steve Wagner - Mixing, Producer
Carl Weathersby - Guitar
Larry Williams - Bass

Growing up in the shadows of Chicago's blues mecca, Theresa's Lounge had a lasting effect on Toronzo Cannon. He'd listen to the raw, soulful sounds of legends like Junior Wells, Buddy Guy and Muddy Waters. This led him to pick up his first guitar as a teenager and learn to sing and play the sounds he heard. Inspired by the 3 Kings (Freddie, B. B. & Albert), a little Hendrix and some 70s r&b/soul, Toronzo soon developed his own powerful, gospel-flavored vocal style and electrifying stage presence. ---Editorial Reviews, amazon.com

Chances are you never heard of Chicago blues guitarist Toronzo Cannon but that's okay because he's probably never heard of you either. When it comes to blues, he's a relatively late bloomer, having grown up in a blues-endowed South Chicago neighborhood where an uncle occasionally subbed on drums for Buddy Guy and Junior Wells at Theresa's, a nearby, now legendary blues outpost. It wasn't until Cannon was close to 30 when he played his first blues gig and has been increasingly more active on the scene ever since.

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On his Delmark debut and third disc overall, he shows that he can hold his own with his more famous Windy City brethren. Though his music may have elements of classic Chicago blues, such as the lively, upbeat tempos and titantic guitar sound, it's also has elements of today's sound as well. Most of the arrangements have a throttling, toe-tapping funky edge ("Baby Girl"), though it's a far cry from the in-your-face funk attacks from New Orleans' Papa Grows Funk and Dumpstaphunk. In between verses, Cannon launches terrific, sometimes screaming solos that aren't overly notey and don't stray into ridiculous wanky histrionics but are developed tastefully to reach an apex of emotion.

The fact that he doesn't overplay his solos keeps the listener locked into the engaging story lines ("Earnestine"), some of which stem from observing life in a bus driver's seat, his day job ("She Loved Me"). On "Open Letter (To Whom It May Concern)," Cannon cleverly uses an attention-getting dirty mic as if he were speaking through a distorted megaphone at a street rally. "Leaving Mood" is even better—Roosevelt Purifoy's suspense-mounting keys hints at a showdown, only to end with thundering gunshot as the suicidal protagonist pulls the trigger for the last time. "Chico's Song" pays homage to the late great Chico Banks, whose friendship meant a lot to a young budding bluesman in a dog-eat-dog scene. With this solid release in hand, Cannon's a bluesman worth knowing. ---San Willging, driftwoodmagazine.wordpress.com

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