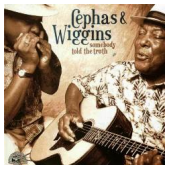
Cephas & Wiggins - Somebody Told The Truth (2002)



1 Stack And The Devil 3:35 2 Railroad Bill 5:09 3 Last Fair Deal Gone Down 3:47 4 Sick Bed Blues 4:33 5 The Pimp In The Pink Suit 2:26 6 Burn Your Bridges 4:04 7 Darling Cora 4:15 8 Foregiveness 3:18 9 Bowling Green Strut 4:33 10 Darkness On The Delta 4:37 11 Reno Factory 2:41 12 Somebody Told The Truth On Me 2:21 13 Something Smells 3:57 Acoustic Guitar, Vocals – John Cephas Harmonica, Vocals – Phil Wiggins Bass – Rob Thomas (tracks: 10) Drums – Steve Williams (tracks: 10) Lead Guitar – Tal Farlow (tracks: 10) Rhythm Guitar – John Stewart (tracks: 10)

The acoustic duo's first album in three years doesn't substantially alter the twosome's established game plan. But its well-recorded mix of studio and live tracks -- including one with a full yet laid-back band -- shows them to be at the top of their form. Combining traditional Delta and Piedmont blues and gospel classics like Robert Johnson's "Last Fair Deal Going Down" (a concert staple that finally makes it to disc), Blind Boy Fuller's salty, suggestive "Something Smells," and Skip James' "Sick Bed Blues" with their similarly styled originals proves they are not stuck in the past, even as they revel in visiting and interpreting it. John Cephas' "The Pimp in the Pink Suit," with its cowboy chorus, could just as well have been written in the '30s. Phil Wiggins shines on "Burn Your Bridges," an instrumental showcase for his lip-shredding harmonica gymnastics that is as compelling as anything from the great Sonny Terry, an obvious influence. While the torchy, supper club jazz of "Darkness on the Delta" (featuring Tal Farlow on guitar) is an interesting tangent, it doesn't really fit with the rest of the more roots-oriented material. But with their devotion to authentic ragtime, folk, deep blues, and religious music, Somebody Told the Truth is another uncompromising entry into Cephas & Wiggins' exceptional catalog. ---Hal Horowitz, AllMusic Review

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