Will Wilde - Bring It On Home (2018)



01. Bad Penny (Rory Gallagher) 04:41 02. Lazy (Deep Purple) 05:50 03. I'm Your Witchdoctor (John Mayall) 02:44 04. Locomotive Breath (Jethro Tull) 03:48 05. Love That Burns (Fleetwood Mac) 07:03 06. Politician (Cream) 05:21 07. The Wizard (Black Sabbath) 04:35 08. Yer Blues (The Beatles) 04:48 09. My Brother Jake (Free) 03:28 10. Bring It On Home (Sonny Boy Williamson/Led Zeppelin) 04:01 11. Parisienne Walkways (Gary Moore/Phil Lynott) 04:40 Will Wilde - harmonica, vocals Danny Giles - guitar Victoria Smith - bass Alan Taylor - drums

What's the all conquering, defining and biggest-selling sound of blues today? Why it would have to be Joe Bonamassa and his guitar-led blend of "Blues-rock" – derived from UK sixties and seventies classic blues-rock guitar Gods. However, guitar didn't always reign supreme in the blues scene.

'Once upon a time, in a corner of musical history of the distant past, the blues 'harp' was King. A cat from Chicago by the name of Little Walter started playing the tiny combination of tin and wood through a microphone and a guitar amplifier and created, for a few years at least, THE all popular defining sound of Chicago blues. Distorted, rhythmical, dynamic and cool.

But this was in the 50s… what's been shaking with the humble "Gob Iron" since? Not much, is the answer, mainly because when blues hit the British and American white kids and they rapidly turned it into rock in the 60s and early 70s, no one had any idea how to play the thing to any great standard.

Walter had taken his secrets to the grave with him; with his untimely death at the age of 38 in

1967. With no new shining star, the harp was sidelined to a tiny, much diminished status.

The UK's Will Wilde, with his new album "Bring It On Home", a "passionate tribute to British and Irish Blues legends", attempts to right this wrong. Wilde, his press release states, "touches the harp like Midas, transforming it from it's bluesy niche into a full on rock power house".

Whether or not this works is really going to be down to the blues-rock fans, and whether they buy into it in a big way or not. This is pure and simply an album of classic rock covers with harp leading the way instead of guitar.

Wilde's version of Gary Moore's "Parisian Walkways" being the litmus test. Blues-rock fans are either going to love it or be indifferent to it. Judging by the reaction on Youtube to the song's video, happily, they seem to be loving it. ---Giles Robson, musicrepublicmagazine.com

Will Wilde hails from Brighton and his first foray into performing was when he formed The Neptune Blues Band in 2005 when he was 17 years old, and released his debut album "Nothin' But Trouble" in 2008. Since then he has released two studio and one live album under his own name.

He comes from a musical family. "Music was always around me." He says. "British hard rock and blues was the soundtrack to my childhood." His grandfather was a wartime jazz 'n' blues pianist and his sister, Dani Wilde, is an acclaimed blues performer with whom I'm sure you are familiar.

Wilde studied drums at the Brighton Institute of Modern Music and yet it was the harmonica, guitar and vocals that ended up captivating him. None more so than the harmonica, obviously.

His latest release is one that brings shivers of expectation or horror from music lovers. Bring It

On Home is covers with a twist expect the choice of numbers to be unexpected. This album pays homage to blues and rock giants, including Purple, Free, Sabbath, Tull and the master mouth organist, Sonny Boy Williamson II amongst others. Anyone brave enough to cover such recognisable classics needs to be not only good but also able to interpret in a way that pays tribute while being distinct. Not an easy job; does he achieve it? The answer is a conservative yes; musically they are all very faithful yet imaginative interpretations. The finest one of all is the last track. Parisienne Walkways has to be heard to be believed. The harmonica/mouth-organ/blues harp/moothie or gob-iron (as Ian Gillan calls it) playing actually replicates Moore's guitar sound in a way beyond comprehension…stunning!

Many of the original tracks featured the harmonica, making it more acceptable to hear, albeit featuring more prominently. The first track is the brilliant Gallagher song, Bad Penny. There is quality guitar backing, recalling the 'jangling' intro of the original. There is a very flat sounding foot/bass drum on this, and some of the tracks, which irritates, However, the vocals are up to scratch too, but it's when the harmonica takes the solo that the fascination grows. It actually works! Lazy, too had harmonica sections, but here Blackmore's guitar and Lord's Hammond are replaced by it. Again, it actually works. Vocally Wilde is no Gillan, but it doesn't spoil the enjoyment, and Danny Giles puts in a very decent guitar solo too. I'm You Witchdoctor is so faithful; you would think Mayall was a guest (he isn't). Harmonica instead of the ubiquitous flute on a Jethro Tull cover? Locomotive Breath is still instantly recognisable and enjoyable. Great guitar backing again from Giles. Peter Green era Mac is next. Love That Burns does just that; it is a superb reading of a great blues track. Sabbath's The Wizard is the first misstep; this is the only time when Wilde's vocals just don't fit. Musically it is good, and the bass playing is actually the highlight. His version of Yer Blues reminds me of Jeff Healey's brilliant take on this Beatles song; except with harmonica, of course. My Brother Jake sounds a little empty as the track is played straight, with the harmonica just echoing one verse. Next, a song written by the great Willy Dixon and first performed by the king of the mouth-organ, Sonny Boy Williamson II (oh, and Zeppelin), Bring It On Home is faithful to the Robert Plant version.

In summary then, a very enjoyable album with some exquisite interpretations and a few disappointments. It is worth getting for Parisienne Walkways alone and I doubt you will be disillusioned with many of the songs. A very worthwhile effort. ---bluesdoodles.com

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