

Omar And The Howlers - The Kitchen Sink (2015)

Written by bluesever

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01. *That Ain't It* 03:03 02. *The Battle Rages On* 03:14 03. *Fire And Gasoline* 05:13 04. *I'll Keep On Dreamin'* 02:10 05. *Dirty People* 02:58 06. *Dixie's All Night Bar* 05:59 07. *Cutie Named Judy* 02:09 08. *Dust My Broom* 04:14 09. *Who Do You Love* 04:02 10. *Hello Operator* 02:42 11. *Can't Hold Out* 03:24 12. *Climb On Board* 02:28 Omar Kent Dykes – guitar, vocals Bruce Jones – bass Wes Starr – drums O'Brien – guitar (6,11) Primich – harp (6,11) Nick Connolly – organ (6,11) Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff – sax (6,11) Paul Junior – bass (6,11) George Rains – drums (6,11)

Kent "Omar" Dykes is in mourning. Four friends of The Howlers' frontman passed away this year, but instead of going the traditional route, Dykes came up with a way to honor them that involved his plumbing skills. The singer/guitarist wrote half a dozen new songs, then plumbed his back catalog for half a dozen more rare tributes. Upon completion, he realized that with the diverse collection of styles and subject matter, he had everything but the kitchen sink in it, so why not just call it that.

On "That Ain't It," the first of the six originals on his new album *The Kitchen Sink*, Dykes whittles a big-headed girl down to size with a bow-wow pedal and a handful of gravedirt thrown in her face. No, wait -- that's just his gritty, gravelly vocal sandin' her down to size.

"The Battle Rages On" features his Sunday go-to-meeting voice along with country-style gospel and some churchy, weepy, barroom pedal steel courtesy of Tommy Spurlock.

A tasty but nasty head-cuttin' guitar lick-off by Dykes and Derek O'Brien lights up the lowdown blues tune "Fire and Gasoline." It's nice to hear Dykes working in several voices on this release.

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This one's got his Beefheart/Karl from Slingblade/Wolf beast on a leash, but you can still hear him straining to break through and bite you on the ass if his genteel-for-him blues voice gives it an opening.

Dykes channels his inner Bob Wills for some smooth Western swing on "I'll Keep On Dreaming," appropriately backed on drums by recent Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame inductee Wes Starr, of Golden State Lone Star Review.

"Dirty People" sounds like an outtake from a '50s Lieber and Stoller session for the Coasters, if they had Howlers like Dykes and O'Brien on filthy electric string-pullin' duty.

"Dixie's All Night" is a Dave Dudley vehicle, a trucker's white line fever tamped down with a truckstop waitress. Complications arise when a dangerous stranger walks in, accompanied by Casper Rawls' and Spurlock's respective chicken picking and weeping. Omar knocks the stranger cold, and he and his hash house honey live happily ever after.

The tribute bunch kicks off with "Cutie Named Judy." Although it sounds like a Little Richard vehicle, it's authored by harpist Jerry McCain, composer of "She's Tough," made famous by Fabulous T-birds' Kim Wilson. Dykes is in full throat-shredding Beefheart/Karl/Wolf beast mode here, backed by some '50s-style barkin' dawg bari sax from Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff.

"Dust My Broom" sounds like it was recorded in some backwater dance-and-stab honky-tonk with Dykes slingin' slide like he was standing in a bucket of water and plugged into a 220 socket.

Hi take on "Who Do You Love" would make George Thorogood run and hide under the porch til the big dog got through, chompin' on the tasty Bo Diddley bad-to-the-bone beat.

The original "Hello Operator" sounds like Chuck Berry's "Memphis, Tennessee" vocalized by a lonesome werewolf. And Dykes goes back to Elmore James for a jump blues makeover on "Can't Hold Out," with the harp line doubled by Gary Primich's harmonica dueling with Kazanoff's sax. James and Dykes' vocals are amazingly similar, though James' vocal on his version

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sounding as shredded as the Omar B/K/W creature's.

“Climb Aboard” is his Johnny Cash tribute: a country gospel chugging along at breakneck speed, propelled by Jerry Lee Lewis-like pumping piano stylings courtesy of Nick Connolly.

The Kitchen Sink is a stunning sendoff, a farewell for friends that plumbs the depths of Omar and the Howlers' vast reservoir of talent and emotion, benefiting all who hear it. ---Grant Britt, nodepression.com

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