

## J. J. Band - Searching For The Blues (2004)

Written by bluelover

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01 - Voodoo Woman 04:56 02 - Searching For The Blues 04:52 03 - I Was Wrong 03:51 04 - Blues For You 04:52 05 - Roxanne 06:49 06 - It Takes Two 03:54 07 - Six Strings Down 05:39 08 - Sen O Wiktorii 06:36 09 - Light Boogie Song 05:58 10 - Thrill Is Gone 05:23 11 - Three O'clock Blues 03:28 12 - Behind Your Back 06:27 Musicians: Jacek Jagus – guitar, vocals Bartek Leczycki - harmonica Rafal Kassaraba – bass Piotr Michalak – keyboards Bartosz Niebielecki - drums

There are always two possibilities after a successful debut: releasing another hit album, as good as or even better than the first one, or cashing in on the initial success and gradually falling into oblivion. From the very start, J.J. Band set themselves very high standards. Album of the Year and Band of the Year were an extraordinary achievement for artists who had just made their debut. With their second album, J.J. Band prove that they wasted no time and still have a lot of potential. First of all, the band has a firmer sound, you can hear the easiness and lightness in their playing. The two natural frontmen, Jacek Jagus and Bartek Leczycki, are now "reinforced" by Pawel Ziolkowski whose "team play" as well as fine piano solos are becoming increasingly important elements of the band's sound.

J.J. Band remains faithful to the Texas style, which you can hear on the first two tracks of the album, Voodoo Woman and Searchin' For The Blues, both composed by Jagus. It also turns out that the band is able to create the right mood in slower songs as well, for instance in another piece composed by Jagus, Blues For You, where he plays one of the finest solos in his career. The CD contains three more compositions by Yogi: the dynamic Light Boogie Song that seems to be taken straight out of Ronnie Baker Brooks' repertoire, then the fiery I Was Wrong and the tranquil, acoustic ballad Behind Your Back, which neatly rounds off the album and features a jazzy harmonica part played by Leczycki.

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There are also songs already known from excellent live performances. In J.J. Band's interpretation, they assume new forms, quite distant from the original version. These include Sting's Roxanne that sounds as if it had been penned by Tadeusz Nalepa, a fine medium-funk rendition of The Thrill Is Gone as well as the Three O'Clock Blues which sounds just like Stevie Ray Vaughan might have played it. Dzem's hit Sen o Victorii in the form of a country ballad with a stylish harmonica by Leczycki may sound like a sacrilege to some ears (Dzem is a legendary Polish blues rock band, headed by the late Rysiek Riedel). Last but not least, two tracks with guest appearances: first, an exuberant rock'n'roll version of Tina Turner's It Takes Two, featuring Ola Lysiak in duet with Jacek Jagus. The performance is full of energy thanks to both vocalists and Ziolkowski's keyboard. You can hear Ola in one more song, Six Strings Down, written by Art Neville upon hearing about Stevie Ray Vaughan's death. Here J.J. Band is assisted by Piotr Michalak on Hammond organ and Jacek Szreniawa on guitar and lead vocal. J.J. Band's version is pretty "traditional" but provides the same thrill as the original performance from the "Tribute To Stevie" concert (released on a DVD).

This record will be a major candidate for the "Album of the Year" award in the Blues Top 2004 ranking, although J.J. Band will face really strong competition this year. ---Andrzej Matysik, Twoj Blues

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