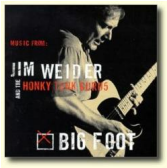
Jim Weider And The Honky Tonk Gurus - Big Foot (1998)



1 Big Foot - Jim Weider 2 Little Miss Lover - Jimi Hendrix 3 Deepest Cut - Jim Weider 4 New Orleans Boogie - Jim Weider 5 Love's Like Rain - Jim Weider 6 Sliding Home - Jim Weider 7 Deep Feeling - Chuck Berry 8 Groove Me - King Floyd 9 I'm in Love - Bobby Womack, Jimmy D. Lane 10 Texas Shuffle - Jim Weider 11 Many Rivers to Cross - Jimmy Cliff Personnel: Jim Weider (acoustic, electric & slide guitars, mandolin) Colin Linden (electric & slide guitars) Jimmy Eppard (baritone guitar) Tony Levin, Rob Leon, Harvey Brooks, Roger Mason (bass) Richard Bell (piano, organ, keyboards, synthesizer, string synthesizer) David Sancious (keyboards, synthesizer, strings, drums) Stan Szelest (piano) Randy Ciarlante (drums, shaker, background vocals) Gary Burke (drums, congas, percussion) Garth Hudson (soprano saxophone, piano, organ, synthesizer) Crispin Cioe (saxophone) Larry Etkin (trumpet) Paul Branin (horns) Robbie Dupre (harmonica) Ernie Cate, Jonell Mosser, Lamont Depew (vocals) Benjamin Alexander (background vocals)

The debut album for Jim Weider and the Honky Tonk Gurus is called Big Foot, but, really, it should be titled "Big Rockin' Sound." The group of well-known musicians from the Wodstock area have put together a recording of some of the hottest electric blues that I've heard in a long, long time. If you haven't yet heard this incarnation of a band, odds are you've heard the Honky Tonk Gurus members in various other guises. Most notably, Jim Weider, Richard Bell and Randy Ciarlante are current members of The Band, the legendary group that once backed Bob Dylan (though Weider and company joined The Band later, circa 1985). Bassist Paul LoRonde hails from the Syracuse area, where he was a member of the blues band The Kingsnakes. Knowing that much, you'll expect this band to rock, but add in a long and stellar list of guest musicians-- including Harvey Brooks, Tony Levin, Rob Leon, David Sancious, Garth Hudson, Rick Danko, Ernie Cate, Jonell Mosser, Robbie Dupree and too many others to list here-- and you've got some near-legendary performances.

The songs are mostly Weider's originals, but they throw in a few well-chosen covers as well-- from Hendrix, Chuck Berry, Bobby Womack, King Floyd, and Jimmy CLiff. The emphasis

throughout is on groove, with out-front highlights from Weider's guitar, which variously soars, tears, and sings. Even in the lighter moments, the Honky Tonk Guru's have a big and irrepressible sound.

The album was recorded over a period of years, with band members dropping in to the studio between their other gigs, but reports from their recent live shows suggest that these guys can do the same thing on stage as they don on the CD-- rock their butts off. Check area record stores for Big Foot, or send check or money order for 15$ for CD, $3.50 for shipping and handling, and 7.75 percent tax for New York residents to Moon Haw Records, PO box 208, West Hurley NY 12491.

Jim Weider and the Honky Tonk Gurus will be holding a CD release party at the West Strand Grill's Downtown Underground on March 28th. Highly recommended. --- Philip H. Farber, hvmusic.com

Born in Woodstock, NY, infamous sideman Jim Weider jumped into the music industry as soon as he could. The area was a hotbed for national talent, with acts like Bob Dylan and the Band recording there. He began recording and hiring himself out to songwriters for backup, eventually gathering up enough money to move to Nashville. He joined Johnny Paycheck's touring band, and supported himself through session work and playing local concerts. By the early '80s, Weider moved back to his hometown and began a tour with Robbie Dupress. When 1983 rolled around, he met former Band drummer Levon Helm, who invited him to join his touring band. Helm was very impressed by Weider, so when the Band was ready to reunite in 1985, Weider took Robbie Robertson's spot when Robertson declined the reunion. He continued to perform with the Band as the decade went on, eventually playing with the group at Roger Waters' recreation of The Wall at the Berlin Wall. In 1993, he also played with the group at Bob Dylan's tribute concert in Madison Square Garden and at Bill Clinton's Inaugural Ball. On top of these performances, he also kept himself busy playing on albums by Robbie Dupree, Artie Traum, Paul Burlison, Rick Danko, and many others. His membership in the Band actually lasted longer than Robbie Robertson's original tenure, as he stayed with the band throughout the '90s, even performing with them at Woodstock '94. When he had time off from the group, he released several best-selling instructional videos for guitar, and finally released his own solo album with the Honky Tonk Gurus entitled Big Foot in 1999. --- Bradley Torreano, allmusic.com

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