Sugarcane Collins - Downunder The Blues (2013)

1. The Blues Downunder 2. Click Go The Shears 3. Some Fool Done Stole My Mojo 4. It's A Mystery 5. Downunder The Blues 6. Take Your Time 7. Saddle Up My Pony 8. Two To The Valley 9. Flowers By The Roadside 10. Berry's Creek Dreaming 11. Line In The Sand 12. Connect The Dots

On this long-awaited follow-up to his acclaimed 2006 title Way Down The River, well-travelled far north Queensland-based blues troubadour Andy ‘Sugarcane’ Collins gets back to the concept of blues from a distinctly Aussie perspective that was manifest in his earlier releases. Comprising 10 original songs and a couple of old bush ballads cleverly rearranged into I-IV-V blues chord structure formats, Downunder The Blues is a well-produced CD showcasing Collins’ imaginative songwriting, sonorous voice and agile acoustic guitar picking. Although Collins employs a large cast of session players including noted blues harpists Andy Vogel and Jim Conway, slide and electric guitarist Kirk Lorange, and didgeridoo player David Hudson, the music is very much in the down-home solo/duo vein, excluding the ensemble-backed ‘Some Fool Done Stole My Mojo’ and ‘Flowers By The Roadside’.

Inspired by early infamous historical similarities between Australia and America, Collins’ opener ‘The Blues Downunder’ is something of a two-part folk/blues suite. It incorporates a traditional folk song describing the woes of convicts in early Australian times, and plaintive musical accompaniment to a series of monologues addressing the plight of indigenous Australians. Collins’ self-penned material is where the blues really kicks in. He reprises his nostalgic ode to the Brisbane tram era ‘Two To The Valley’ from his Lake Street Serenade album, and muses on themes relating to relationships, childhood days and environmental issues. His narratives framed in various blues styles from Delta to ragtime and the Piedmont, Collins is an Aussie master of the country blues. ---Al Hensley, rhythms.com.au

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