Mark And The Pentones - We Only Drink At Work (2011)

01 - Sunday Funnies 04:51 02 - Sneaking Sally Through The Alley 05:30 03 - I Earned The Right (To Sing The Blues) 04:43 04 - End Of The World 04:41 05 - Immigrant Song - Whipping Post 15:10 06 - Old Man 08:50 07 - Big Chief - Hey Pocky Way - Tremé Song 14:21 08 - Willin' 05:20 09 - Going Back To Louisiana 04:29 10 - Don't Leave Nothing Behind 05:22 11 - Saint James Infirmary 06:19 Mark Penton — guitar and vocals Thomas C. McDonald — bass guitar and vocals Eddie Christmas — drums and percussion

Holding down the “early shift,” preceding Big Al Carson six nights a week at The Funky Pirate on Bourbon Street, Mark Penton and his eponymous group The Pentones have built up a following in their own right. Quiet and low-key, Penton doesn’t get a lot of ink or air time but it would not be an exaggeration to rate him among the top 10 lead guitarists in a city that has no shortage of them. Whether leading his own group or backing another artist – like he did on Smoky Greenwell’s 2008 Between Iraq and a Hard Place – Penton can be counted on to give a stellar performance. Anyone who can make his axe sing like the late, great Duane Allman gets my vote.

On this 11-track CD, recorded live at The Funky Pirate, Penton and band mates Eddie Christmas (drums, percussion) and Thomas McDonald (bass, backup vocals) offer up a smooth mix of slow bluesy numbers and lively up-tempo arrangements. They are, in most cases, long enough for all three musicians to stretch their musical legs and display their respective talents. And, in addition to being an extraordinarily gifted musician and vocalist, Penton is also an accomplished songwriter with four cleverly worded original compositions. “Sunday Funnies,” the opening track, likens the song’s protagonist to a comic strip character (“I feel like a joke / I spend all my money and you love me till I’m broke”). Nicely done covers include “Sneakin’ Sally Through the Alley,” Neil Young’s “Old Man,” a medley of Led Zeppelin’s “Immigrant Song” and The Allman Brothers’ “Whipping Post,” and a medley of classic Mardi Gras Indian songs (“Big Chief,” “Hey Pocky Way” and “Treme Song”). And, if “Don’t Leave Nothing Behind”—another Penton original—doesn’t convince you that he is one of the best guitarists around, nothing will.

His solo at the song’s end is a killer! ---Where Y'at Magazine, cdbaby.com

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