

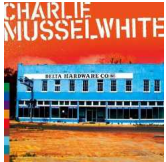
## Charlie Musselwhite - Delta Hardware (2006)

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## Charlie Musselwhite - Delta Hardware (2006)



1. *Church Is Out*
2. *One Of These Mornings*
3. *Sundown*
4. *Black Water*
5. *Clarksdale Boogie*
6. *Just A Feeling*
7. *Gone Too Long*
8. *Invisible Ones*
9. *Town To Town*
10. *Blues For Yesterday*

### Personnel:

- \* Charlie Musselwhite - vocals, harmonica, electric guitar
- \* Chris 'Kid' Andersen - guitars
- \* Randy Bermudes - bass guitar
- \* June Core - drums, percussion

While Charlie Musselwhite has always been an adventurous musician -- take into consideration his fine Cuban inflected *Continental Drifter*, the Americana drenched *One Night In America*, and the rollicking rock and soul on *Sanctuary* -- the Delta of his upbringing has never been left out of the mix entirely. Musselwhite may have had a reason to dig so deeply into the hard-edged roots of Delta by way of Chicago blues on this set: he lost both his parents in 2005. The CD booklet is filled with pictures of the sites of his life in Mississippi. *Delta Hardware* was recorded with Musselwhite's road band, and it has the feeling of motion along with its looking into the past. Guitarist Chris "Kid" Andersen, bassist Randy Bermudes, and drummer June Core hop into the heart of the electric trancelike blues that have been a part of Musselwhite's backbone his entire performing career. The question is, why didn't he record with these guys before? *Delta Hardware* is a raw, squalling album heavy on brittle guitars, trancelike rhythms, and of course,

Musselwhite's harmonica filling the gaps where his world-weary voice shouts, hollers, and bellows. Musselwhite and band dig deep here.

The set opens with the strolling minor-key rock & roll blues of "Church Is Out," where Musselwhite offers an autobiographical sketch with boasts worthy of Jay Z. This shimmy shaking electric blues is merely a portent of things to come. On the track that follows, "One of These Mornings," all hell breaks loose. A call and response between Musselwhite and Andersen shuffles like a train off the track to Core's triple-time drums. When he sings, it's more like a roar; unfettered, full of power and the grit necessary to wail above a band playing their asses off. His harp solo is just a scorcher, and it all happens in two-minutes-and-thirty-seconds. "Sundown" is a classic one-four-five shuffle, but with dueling slide guitars popping over the top of Musselwhite's voice. The blunt edge of the blade comes home to roost on "Black Water," where Musselwhite, his harp, and Andersen's guitars are a wandering band of prophets from the old testament warning of the perils of the present age; Musselwhite sounds sad but determined; he's unflinching in his terror-vision and it is bleak. The music is sad as well; it's trancelike, Junior Kimbrough-styled -- repetitive, percussive, snaky -- and when it's time for his brief harp solo, the instrument sounds like it's weeping. Little Walter's "Just a Feeling" is just plain slow and mean. It's a swampy moaner and Andersen's guitars are like fine forged steel with a serrated edge. When Musselwhite digs into his spoken word bag over the tough-assed blues as on the opener and "Invisible Ones," there's not a second that doesn't work. His jeremiad is pure working-class poetry. There is proof in the pudding too, where the crowd expresses its appreciation for the hip-shaking "Clarksdale Boogie," recorded at Red's Juke Joint in that very town. Delta Hardware is the kind of record only a veteran could make, full of backbone, spit and vinegar; it is an early candidate for blues record of the year. ---Thom Jurek, All Music Guide.

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