

BLUES MUSIC Magazine

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TROY GONYEA
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Lotus Eater Records



Part aggressive Fabulous Thunderbird guitar, part Westside Chicago soul, part Steve Cropper, part Black Crowes, part Howl best describes the long-awaited recording from inventive guitarist Troy Gonyea. Since his guitar residency with Kim Wilson in both the Blues Band and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Gonyea has been both a successful independent recording artist and also an in-demand

guitar for hire in bands like Sugar Ray and the Bluetones or Anthony Geraci's Boston Blues All Stars. In addition, Gonyea delivers his musical vision at his weekly gigs in Worcester, MA. In between, he traveled for two years backing Booker T.

All those experiences prompted Gonyea to release his nine-song vision of where blues can exist in our contemporary world. Though he was a committed blues guitarist ever since he picked his first note at age 13, Gonyea's love was always the Chicago blues from the 1950s that featured Jimmy Rogers, Muddy Waters, and Dave and Louis Myers. Then the ferocious guitar and voices of Otis Rush and Magic Sam blindsided Gonyea. "There's something about that Chicago blues of that period, it's so mean and raw that it still stands up today. It wasn't polite music. It was the alternative rock of its day."

Gonyea honors all that he has taken in by recording tunes by Magic Sam, Willie Dixon, Jimmy McCracklin, Duster Bennett, the traditional "Tell Heaven," and four originals. What stands out in each song is the combination of Gonyea's resounding guitar complimented by his aching voice. Most of what we remember of Gonyea's work was his prominent and studied guitar. What is most obvious here is the convincing authority of Gonyea's voice. To fully appreciate that maturity, check out his tortured pleading on Magic Sam's "That's Why I'm Crying," Bennett's "Jumping At Shadows," and "Tell Heaven."

Gonyea shows off his harmonica talents on "Bring It On Home," his rock and roll sensibilities on "(Do The) Curl Up And Die," and the testifyin' lessons he learned from Booker T. on "As I Am." The CD ends with Gonyea's continued reverence for the power of Magic Sam on "I Am Feeling So Good (Owed T' Don)." Here, Gonyea marries Sam's "Feel So Good" boogie with his personal story tellin' rap. Backed by a crack band of Brooks Milgate (keys), Marty Ballou (bass), and Marty Richards (drums), Gonyea recorded this set live to better capture the band's work in this unaltered format to capture a moment of exciting interplay.

— Art Tipaldi