

BLUES MATTERS!

Our name says it all!

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**AND STEVE CROPPER
IS STILL ON FIRE!**



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UNITED STATE OF MIND

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Manhattan Records

This collaboration brings together Robin Trower, Maxi Priest and Livingstone Brown, all leading lights in their respective areas and genres. Robin will be the most familiar among blues followers and whilst the writing credits are split equally his fingerprints are all over the musical arrangements. The title track is first up and sets the tone for much of what follows, smooth soft rock with a jazzy vibe. Maxi Priest is a good vocalist giving the songs just what they need. Slightly understated strings and brass never intrude into what the main players are doing.

The opener drifts effortlessly into *We Are Just People*, maybe my favourite track on the album, soulful vocals augmented by a slightly funky guitar showing Robin at his best. On *Fire Like Zsa Zsa* is next, a bit more up tempo it bubbles along always threatening to go into overdrive but keeping the tension right to the end. *Walking Wounded* is a beautiful love song building slowly from a guitar and vocal intro, just wonderfully executed. *Sunrise Revolution* like many songs on here is an observation of the troubles in the world today but offers hope and positivity. *Hands To The Sky* does allow the horns to come to the fore a little more, another song of positivity, Maxi is clearly having fun delivering the lyrics, and the band funk it out at the end. *Good Day* is funky RnB, a real builder that gets you nodding along to the rhythm.

The closer *Where Our Love Came From* is another wonderfully understated piece of classy musicianship. Robin reproducing echoes of *Bridge Of Sighs* style guitar softly taking centre stage between the lead vocal. Livingstone needs a special mention, not only for the superb bass and keys throughout but for the lions share of production which is world class.

STEVE YOURGLIVCH

AMAURY FAIVRE

2020

Independent

Here for me is an unusual thing, a French Blues artist who won the Swiss Blues Challenge in 2017.

Not having come across many French artists in our genre, I'm intrigued. Amaury studied his music in Besancon (France) then moved about before settling in Geneva. Having done two albums already, one with an electric band and one as an acoustic duo his third starts off with the harmonica blasting *Amuse-bouche* which screams Sonny Terry and has me sitting up in my chair and boom as quick as it started it finished going straight into *Wrong Girl*, where we get to hear Amaury's quiet but affirming voice with guitar and harmonica.

Often people say how and why are the blues still being played in the 21st century, well heartache and sorrow will always be around and so will the blues. This type of album will help to keep Blues alive, the sadness is there, especially on the third song, *Sister*. It's as if his harmonica is crying, a soul of its own, the thing that I love about this album is his voice and the

"This type of album will help to keep Blues alive, the sadness is there"

way it softly entwines with his reed blowing. On *Kinda Girl* and *Heart Of Stone* I get a feeling of floating, songs that make you think of being somewhere else, looking at the mountains through the trees, or by a waterfall watching fish jumping. *Invite A Danger* literally takes me to the French quarter of New Orleans grabbing a beautiful girl and dancing round like you have no cares, enjoying everything around you. Such a mixture and I'm only on the sixth song, but here is an album of eleven original songs, eleven great songs.

Eleven songs I'll play again and again and with it comes a lovely little booklet of lyrics, but you really don't need it cos the songs speak for themselves. Viva la France.

BARRY BLUESBARN HOPWOOD

