



THE BLUESMEN - *The Bluesmen* (2002)

Roberto Formignani: vocals, guitars
Antonio D'Adamo: harmonica
Bruno Corticelli: bass
Roberto Morsiani: drums

The Bluesmen 's self titled album features 11 raw blues tunes. Those true bluesmen decided to take a deep dive into the blues and stay true to the spirit of this kind of music, which is simple, not easy.

No Words Blues is a quasi instrumental tune which features a dobro, a slide, a harmonica and the good old way of accompanying the melody lines played on the resonator using a humming vocal line. Sadly the harmonica sounds overdistrorted.

Passion Of Blues features again a slide riff with the right touch of distortion. Also the harmonica fills give that extra touch. Cool Harmonica solo by Antonio D' Adamo. Guitar solo at the end. Very bluesy.

The Blues Is My Life is the typical slow blues progression, perfect to let the Bluesmen show their teeth. Great guitar solo, with lots of feel and a truly blues spirit. Also another cool harmonica solo.

Super Shuffle is a country/blues/swing number highlightin' Roberto Formignani's virtuosity. Banjo rolls, hybrid pickin' and natural harmonics rake: groovy!!!

My Baby is a rockabilly song by Willy Dixon with beautiful and typical rockabilly guitar sound: reverb and a delay setted at 100 to 150... Instant surf!

Big Trouble In Santa Fe' grabs you by the hair with a cool chord progression full of groove. Again the harmonica sounds too distorted and muddy to me. The instrumental format gives the guys the possibility to shine thru the whole song with their musical ability. Again Formignani gives a good proof of how strong his blu roots are...

To Be (And Not To Have) features Rossella Graziani singin'... She gives the tune a jazz club feel. Lovely. Prolly one of the best song of the album, mood-wise. The guitar solo sweats blues. Good phrasin' and timin'.

Jimmy Hallo George is another track with a great mood. Features also horns for the extra swing feel. The album reveals to be a cool ride between blues, country, jazz and swing. Formignani unleashes another great solo, again with rakes and a funny muted, staccato line that ends the solo.

Blues For Tom takes our Bluesmen back to slow tempos for an instrumental track full of feel. Played with taste and conviction. The sound of harmonica is way better in this track too.

CrossRoad Blues is the Robert Johnson AND Eric Clapton classic that will always make our asses shake. The Bluesmen version is no exception. The slide comes back in Roberto 's left hand for a ride at the crossroad. The harmonica is muddy again, so I think that it was a deliberate choice to record it that way.

Bluerain is another instrumental track with a beautiful Little Wing Style chord sequence. Harmonica is clean again here. Great phrasin' by Formignani here again. The best song of the whole album to me. Tons of feel. Love it!

The last track Bluerain is well worth the whole album, but there's a lot to be heard in this second album by the bluesmen. The songs are beautiful, and the recordin' is good too.

Roberto Formignani handles vocal duties too, and even if he's not the typical Blue voice, he's a quite good singer. All the musicians are very prepared, and virtuosity shines thru here and there, but never in a too strong way.

The Bluesmen have reached maturity in their phrasin' and they balance it with musicality very carefully.

Recommended if you're in love with the blues and with well crafted music.

Rating: 9

(reviewed by Max)