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December 2006



Kim Richardson
Kaleidoscope BROS

Last month's feature story by **Ruth Schweitzer** on **Jackie & Kim Richardson** mentioned Kim's new CD - it is here and it is a major release. As we go to press, a few days before the **Women's Blues Revue**, I can only



hope that she has copies with her because you must get this one. Kim has lived in Montreal for some years now and has been assembling the parts collected here. Much of her career there has been as a backup singer, a life chronicled in "Backup Singer Blues" with great detail and wit. There is an emotional duet with her mother, "Deep Down Inside", drawn from **Joe Sealy's Africville Suite**, the JUNO-winning tribute/lament for that historic black community of Halifax doomed to redevelopment by the city fathers. Jackie was intimately involved with this recording back in 1996 and Sealy himself returns on piano with **Doug Riley** on B3. It serves as a timely reminder, both of **Africville** and of Sealy's landmark album. The monster song on the CD, though, follows right on and it is "Turn It Up". As the glorious gospel sound gives way to this horn-led, sultry rocker, you will indeed turn it all the way up, if you haven't done so earlier. **Jason Lang** should win an award for this arrangement. "Six Jours" is one of several songs in French. This one is a fine acoustic blues with **Guy Belanger** on harp and **Donald Meunier** on guitar. From blues, through folk, through reggae-fied **Michel Pagliaro** rockers and delicate acoustic ballads Richardson proves herself to be a distinctive singer. She co-produced this CD with **Nanette Workman**, who also knows a bit about backup singing. Needless to say, a great deal of attention was paid to the backup singing here! Her website is www.kimrichardson.com and many more fine Quebec - based CDs are available at www.bros.ca.

Jack de Keyzer *Silver Blues* DVD Blue Star

Mako Funasaka's Talkin' Blues Series continues with a second superb effort. This time **Jack de Keyzer's** 25th Anniversary celebration at Hugh's Room forms the core of the 87-minute DVD. That's the show immortalized on his *Silver Blues* CD. It's by no means just that, though, as Jack talks about his life and career. As the idea was to showcase songs he had written over that time span, Mako's camera gives Jack a chance to put those songs into historical context. Mostly complete song performances are featured here, as opposed to documentary-style snippets, and eleven songs are included, about half of them different from the CD's 13-song program. Several of these are from other sources: from the *Six String Lover* recording session with complete performances of "If You Were My Woman (and I Was Your Man)", "Engine Trouble" & "Jump Right To It" and "Soul Lover" is from the **Distillery Blues Festival**. The smoking band behind Jack shouldn't be ignored, with **Chris Murphy** on tenor sax, **David Dunlop** on trumpet & flugelhorn, **Martin Aucoin** on keyboards, **Alan Duffy** on bass and **Tony Ajo** on drums. When they get solo space they don't waste it. Mako once again proves to be a master at letting his guest relax and say what he wants to say. He also has a remarkable opening sequence and closing sequence to go



along with the main event. The quote on the back cover of the DVD is from **Blues Revue** magazine, calling Jack "a coveted super-hero in Canada", this DVD (and the CD) will explain why. Jack's web site is www.jackdekeyzer.com.



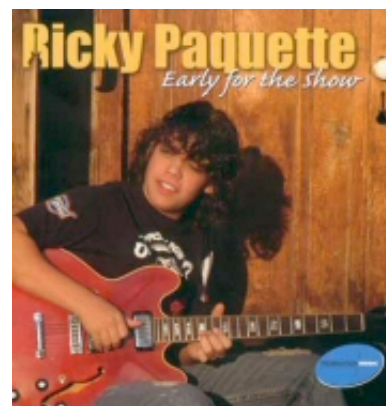
Dionne Taylor *I Love Being Here With You* Marquis/EMI

This fine young jazz singer was a part of last year's **Women's Blues Revue** and perhaps as a result, has a new CD with three excellent blues songs. Some of the city's finest jazz players are here to help out and they do just fine as a blues band. "Little Black Dress", if memory serves, was one of her songs at the WBR and it opens the CD. It's an original, written with **Liz Tansey**, that'll make you want to meet her and her friends when she's out in her little black dress. A mid tempo soul blues, with **Bernie LaBarge** on guitar and **Doug Riley** on piano, it should quickly become popular with other singers as well. Following right on is "Knock Me A Kiss", a hit for **Nat 'King' Cole & Louis Jordan**. It gets a strong performance. **Buddy Johnson**, a much under-appreciated big band leader & songwriter, wrote "Save Your Love For Me" a lovely ballad, this time

with **Jake Langley** soloing on guitar. Taylor has a fine voice for blues and I think you'll like the jazzier pieces here too. This CD seems to be aimed at a new ballad style that incorporates more blues into jazz and contemporary R&B. **DK Ibomeka** has also found it, maybe they're on to something. Her web site is www.dionnetaylor.com.

Ricky Paquette *Early For The Show* Preservation/Fusion

It may not be an entirely fair comparison but this is Quebec's **Jimmy Bowskill**. Just shy of his fifteenth birthday for this recording, he shows himself to be a hugely talented guitarist with a surprisingly mature voice. His versions of **Clapton's** "Crossroads", **Buddy Guy's** "Leave My Little Girl Alone", **Hendrix's** "Red House" and the **Allmans'** "Statesboro Blues" prove beyond a doubt that he has the chops. If these are not much different from the versions you remember, that was probably the point. "Schoolboy Blues" and "I'm A Fool" show that he can write his own, with "Schoolboy" in particular displaying acute observational skills in his environment. "Woodshed Blues" is a new, impossibly fast, guitar workout, reminiscent of **Dave Edmund's** classical pieces during his **Love Sculpture** days. "Terra Plane Blues" is an unusual acoustic take on the **Robert Johnson** standard. **Guy Belanger** shines on harp on five songs and **Bob Stagg** deserves mention for his B3 work throughout. Most Quebec artists do not get national distribution and often the market is large enough there to get by. Distribution Fusion is making this album available and that should give you an indication of his talent. Check out the record company web site at www.preservationmusic.com.

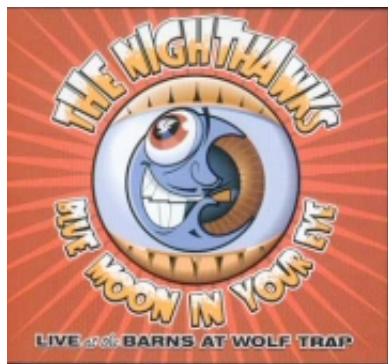


Brokenjoe *Long Walk to Nowhere* Brokenjoe

This new collaboration of three old friends calls itself a roots band. **Joe Toole** immediately casts its distinctive sound by playing only banjo. His old band mate in **The Phantoms**, **Jerome Godboo** is on harp and **Alec Fraser** rounds out the trio on bass. They all sing and despite the banjo and Joe's pure Appalachian baritone, it's difficult to imagine readers of this column not enjoying this one. The old-timey feel of the music is immediately attractive. Especially nice are Alec's "Mr. Blues (You Never Were My Friend)" (and a rare recorded vocal). And Jerome's "Jerry Stone", a domestic tale many will recognize. Joe's "Let's Pretend I Did" is pure country but it'll bring forth a wide smile. Two songs by Joe, "Desperation Blues" and "The Hole" (not coincidentally both with Joe on guitar) are my excuse for writing about this CD and "The Hole" needs no apology at all. It's a triumph by any definition, a harrowing tale of the perils of mining in Nova Scotia with Joe, on slide guitar, giving free rein to his marvelous voice. The concluding "Porkchops", while not a blues, has much the same mood and an equally stunning performance. Live music is always best and a good place to get this disc. You could also go to www.brokenjoe.com.



The Nighthawks *Blue Moon In Your Eye* Powerhouse



The Nighthawks are one of the longest-lived and hardest-working bands in existence _ with one source saying the band has played over 7,000 gigs since their founding in Washington, D.C. in 1972. And they're still counting: they'll be at The Silver Dollar Room on December 2nd. They have never actually called themselves a blues band but there's more than enough blues sensibility to satisfy even hardened purists. Of the original members, guitarist **Jimmy Thackery** went solo in 1986. **Mark Wenner** is still one of the most forceful & versatile harp players around and he's also the primary vocalist. Original drummer **Pete Ragusa** handles the soul vocals. **Paul Bell** is the current guitarist and **Johnny Castle** is on bass and vocals. This album, their 22nd, was recorded live at the famous **The Barns at Wolf Trap** and is a CD and DVD package of a high energy

show from April of last year. The opener of this well-paced set is the theme song from **The Sopranos**, "Woke Up This Morning", which opens with some lovely "Cristo Redentor"-like harp work. The lyric is the source of the eye catching album title. Further highlights are a long, burning version of "Black Night" and a rare original, co-written by Ragusa, "Soul of a Man" which has no connection to **Blind Willie Johnson**. Some **Carl Perkins** rockabilly begins the build up to the finale with a "Walkin' After Midnight"- "Same Thing"- "Can't Judge A Book by Looking At The Cover" sequence that has the crowd roaring for more. My advance DVD has kept the between-song patter, making for a more entertaining visual experience. They may well have copies of this one at the Dollar for you to purchase, otherwise go to www.thenighthawks.com. You'll also see there that *Times Four*, the album with the 1977 CHUM-FM broadcast from the **El Mocambo**, is still available!

- John Valenteyn, jvalenteyn8724@rogers.com

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