

## Coco Montoya – The Essential of Coco Montoya 2009

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 19 February 2011 19:48 - Last Updated Friday, 30 October 2020 15:55

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### Coco Montoya – The Essential of Coco Montoya (2009)



1. *Fear No Evil* 3:50 2. *Am I Losing You* 6:41 3. *Seven Desires* 4:15 4. *Sending Me Angels* 4:41 5. *Too Much Water* 4:00 6. *Monkey See, Monkey Do* 4:10 play 7. *Do What You Want To Do* 5:05 play 8. *Just Let Go* 4:54 9. *Same Dog* 4:46 10. *You Don't Love Me* 5:09 11. *Give It To A Good Man* 4:51 12. *You'd Think I'd Know Better By Now* 5:08

The Essential Coco Montoya presents tracks from the guitarist's initial solo recordings released by Blind Pig in the mid-90's. Montoya, who honed his signature chops as a protégé of modern blues forefathers Albert Collins and John Mayall, personally selected the tracks for this compilation. They document his post-Bluesbreakers entry into the limelight and the beginning of a still running ascendancy in the Blues-Rock realm. These recordings, now a decade old, evoke a highly creative place and time in this world-class guitarist's career as he came into his own.

Santa Monica-born guitarist Coco Montoya has been a member of Albert Collins' Icebreakers (as a drummer), and was the first lead guitarist in John Mayall's re-formed Bluesbreakers in 1985. He is, of course, best known as a solo artist with six recordings cut between 1995 and 2007. The reason for the long breaks between albums is simple: endless touring; it's the way a bluesman really makes his money. Blind Pig Records was the first label Montoya recorded on as a solo artist, and he cut three albums for the imprint -- *Gotta Mind to Travel*, *Ya Think I'd Know Better*, and the incredible *Just Let Go*. As such, *The Essential Coco Montoya*, compiles the essential tracks from his Blind Pig stint. There are a dozen tracks here, all reflecting the more R&B and soul-based approach Montoya's form of the electric blues takes; it is one of the things that makes him fresh and unique -- combined with his stellar singing voice and signature guitar style. This serves him better than it would most post-'80s blues guitarists, who take a far more rock & roll-based approach. The funny thing is, most of the latter claim to be influenced by Stevie Ray Vaughan, but it is Montoya who captures the R&B aspect of Vaughan's music, though it came to him from working with Collins, another Texan. The set kicks off with a stellar version of Robert Ward's "Fear No Evil," where Montoya's voice and guitar are in equal balance with a crack rhythm section of B-3, rhythm guitar, bass, and drums. The band gels and follows

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his emotive tip to the core of the song. Other great cuts here include the wonderful Earl and Ernie Cate number "Am I Losing You," a wonderful cover of Frankie Miller's "Sending Me Angels," "Too Much Water" (an original), a killer read of Collins' "Do What You Want to Do," the self-penned "Same Dog," and the set closer "You'd Think I'd Know Better by Now," with his slide guitar speaking alongside that throaty, clear-as-a-bell baritone singing voice. Montoya's Blind Pig Records are all in print and worth owning; in fact, they are preferable to his latter Alligator sides because they sound far more natural, warm, and full, without the artificial and grating high end in the guitar level and the overall thin sound that is a label trademark and tends to make its artists sound the same. This is a wonderful compilation, full of killer tracks; it's worthwhile as a mixtape if you already own the individual Blind Pig records, but more importantly, it is a solid introduction to an enigmatic modern bluesman. ---Thom Jurek, allmusic.com

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