Todd Wolfe Blues Project - Live From Manny's Car Wash (1999)

1 Can't Quit You
2 Evil *play*
3 Stop Messin' Round
4 On The Run
5 Same Thing
6 Wreck My Life *play*
7 4 Walls
8 Homework
9 Eyesight

Musicians:
Todd Wolfe - Guitar/Vocals
Eric Massimino - Bass
Mike Lattrell - Keyboards
Yves Gerard - Drums/Back Vocals
Paul Unsworth - Drums {1,2,5,7}

Todd Wolfe spent five years playing guitar behind pop songstress Sheryl Crow. Now he fronts his own band, a strongly blues-based rock outfit whose first recording, Live From Manny's Car Wash, delivers heavyweight guitar heroics from the old school. The players are finely tuned and capable of expressive dynamics: bassist Eric Massimino and drummers Yves Gerard and Paul Unsworth don't sound strictly like moonlighting rockers, while keyboardist Mike Lattrell, with his supportive rhythm work and strong soloing, is a tremendous asset. Wolfe's guitar sensibility is a rock 'n' roller's, bringing a searing quality to the band's Cream-y explorations. That's a useful point of comparison for Wolfe's style: Drop the needle (as it were) anywhere on Live, and you'll hear strong echoes of Eric Clapton's playing. Wolfe has adopted the legato note-cramming and highly ornamented approach of latter-period Clapton. He's imaginative, varying his attack song by song, and it's refreshing to discover a guitarist who doesn't smack of Texas or the West

Coast. Wolfe's tone isn't far from Clapton's, though judging from the high noise level in his signal, his compression comes from a high-gain amp rather than from his pickups. Wolfe doesn't sound like a natural singer, but he gives a spirited and relatively unmannered performance. The set list is a traditional, with selections such as "Same Thing," "Evil," "I Can't Quit You Baby" and "Homework." A high-energy "Stop Messin' Round," from Fleetwood Mac (possibly via Gary Moore), keeps the Brit Flag flying. Wolfe shows his songwriting hand only on "Four Walls," a Son House-style Delta slider arranged for a band, and the excruciating warp-speed power boogie "On the Run." So Live serves as a calling card, introducing Wolfe and his guitar but revealing little of the artist. For many that will be enough, and this is quite a good album in "gunslinger" terms. ---Tom Hyslop

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