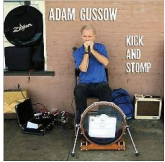


Adam Gussow - Kick And Stomp (2013)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 07 June 2014 16:08 - Last Updated Monday, 03 May 2021 09:40

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01. *Kick And Stomp* (3:43) 02. *Good Morning Little Schoolgirl* (2:54) 03. *Sunshine Of Your Love* (6:36) 04. *Every Day I Have The Blues* (4:53) 05. *Poor Boy* (4:08) 06. *Shaun's Song* (4:43) 07. *Goin' Down South* (4:42) 08. *Buford Chapel Breakdown* (3:40) 09. *Crossroads Blues* (5:45) 10. *Mr Cantrell* (5:56) 11. *Down Ain't Out* (5:58) 12. *My Baby's So Sweet* (4:11) 13. *Sugar* (3:50) 14. *The Entertainer* (2:23) Adam Gussow - Harmonica, Percussion, Vocals

Hot on the heels of his recent *The Blues Doctors* release with Alan Gross, harmonica maestro Adam Gussow has now released his debut solo album, *Kick And Stomp*.

Anyone who is familiar with Gussow's work in *Satan and Adam*, in *The Blues Doctors*, or through his blues harp teachings, might be able to predict what can be found on this album: virtuoso harmonica playing, expressive vocals, and a kick drum and tambourine pedal providing an incessant backbeat to songs that are delivered with exuberance, emotion and no little wit. And that is exactly what *Kick And Stomp* delivers.

The first three songs capture the album in microcosm. Opening with the instrumental "Kick and Stomp" (which does what it says on the tin), Gussow then produces a solid re-working of Sonny Boy Williamson's classic "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" before laying down a gloriously bonkers version of Cream's "Sunshine Of Your Love" with the harmonica covering all guitar parts and including a superb solo that takes the song in a wholly new direction before looping back, almost inevitably, to that famous guitar riff again.

Featuring 14 songs, six of which Gussow wrote, the overall feel of the album is upbeat. The

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covers range from the traditional "Poor Boy" (permanently a long way from home) to R.L. Burnside's one-chord stomp, "Goin' Down South" as well as covers of rock, jazz and even R'n'B oldies such as Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar". Interestingly, Gussow also covered "Sugar" on The Blues Doctors' CD.

Gussow's re-interpretations of various classic songs that were originally guitar-focussed help to remind the listener of the quality of the original songs as well as enjoying Gussow's work. "Every Day I Have The Blues" works superbly with just harp and kick drum, sounding like an amplified foot stomping on the wooden floor of an old back porch, but also reminds us of the genius of the original melody.

Gussow's one-man band approach enables him to take on songs that are sometimes over-played in their original format. Cream's version of Robert Johnson's "Crossroad Blues", for example, has been massacred by so many pub and jam bands that Gussow's harp-led version enables us to reflect on just how good the original song actually is.

Likewise, the closing song is an upbeat rendition of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" which, whilst perhaps missing some of the original's wistfulness, nevertheless does accentuate its exuberance and joie de vivre.

Kick And Stomp was recorded and mixed by Bryan W. Ward at The Tone Room in Oxford, Mississippi in July 2010 and Gussow and Ward have done a fine job of capturing the dynamic range of Gussow's playing. Listening to this CD, it is easy to forget the complexity of what Gussow is doing. Without other instruments to provide backing, his harp has to suggest the implied chord changes over which he is singing, whilst maintaining a fluid rhythm with the kick drum. It is a mark of how successful he is, that none of the songs sounds forced, nor like they might have benefited from additional instrumental support.

So, having been for 25 years the harmonica-playing sideman to one of the great one-man bands of the blues, Sterling "Mr Satan" Magee, Gussow is now taking his own first steps as a one-man band of his own. On the evidence of Kick and Stomp, it is a role he is eminently capable of playing.---Rhys Williams, bluesblastmagazine.com

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