

Brad Wilson - Power Blues Guitar Live (2016)

Written by bluesever

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1 Got My Mojo Working 04:20 2 I'm Tore Down 05:38 3 I Can't Quit You Baby 08:11 4 All Kinds of a Fool 03:26 5 Born Under a Bad Sign 03:11 6 Sweet Home Chicago 06:23 7 Slide on Over 03:20 8 I Just Want to Make Love to You 08:47 9 She Moves Me 05:53 10 Standin' Around Cryin' 08:15 11 Black Coffee at Sunrise 03:09 12 Stormy Monday 05:20 13 I'm Still Breathing 03:59 Brad Wilson - guitar, vocals Oscar Huguet - bass Kirk Nelson - keyboards Joe Robb - saxophone Thaxter Daggs, Kofi Baker - drums

When you pop a CD in your player, sit back to listen, and are increasing the volume after the opening chords of a guitar-on-fire version the Muddy Waters classic, “Got my Mojo Working”; you know the artist definitely has his Mojo Working! Brad Wilson plays the guitar like he is rip-cording through the blues world on this CD – hold on! Brad’s been very active on the West Coast blues scene for several years, performing over 100 shows a year everywhere from clubs to festivals. This is his second CD release on the Cali Bee label, the first being the critically acclaimed 2015 release of Blues Thunder which was successful on the Roots Music Report Chart as well as several international charts. It is his third CD since 2013. His music has also been included in movies, television and movie soundtracks (including two John Carpenter films). The CD is a live collection of blues standards and four original songs from his former studio albums Blues Thunder (released in 2015) and Hands on the Wheel (released in 2013). It was recorded live during the supportive tour for his Hands of the Wheel album where Brad claims, in an interview published in the Blues.Gr blog, that he was “playing the guitar with lots of emotion, reaching for riffs and taking chances during solos” and that the drummers drove “the inspiration for his solos”. The live feel of Power Blues Guitar Live gives this recording a heart and soul that brings the old standards new life as well as showcasing Brad’s songwriting and guitar skills.

This CD is proof that the blues are timeless. Brad covers songs from the 1936 Robert Johnson Blue’s classic, “Sweet Home Chicago” to a few Muddy Waters classics including “Got my Mojo Working” (written by Preston Foster), “I Just want to Make Love to You” (written by Willie

Dixon), “She Moves Me” and “Standing Around Crying”. He brings new life to all of these songs which have been covered by countless artists and are well known to most dedicated blue’s lovers. Brad makes each one his own with powerful riffs, hearth thumping solos and just enough of the classic chording and phrasing on his guitar to keep the blues train rolling. His vocals are as smooth as chrome and works perfectly with his searing, often high octane guitar growls and bends.

His cover of “I’m Tore Down”, made popular by Freddie King and later by Eric Clapton is an exceptional track. The solo in this song will keep you wanting more. He is a master of taking the melody, along with a few hints of the old twelve bar blues, then heading off on a blue’s ride. Then he brings you back home. It is a great ride. Followed by, “I Can’t Quit You Baby”, a Willie Dixon twelve bar standard (that was also a Led Zeppelin favorite), Brad slows it down a bit. He begins with fundamental blues, excellent chording and rhythm, then he flies into a solo with a note so perfect your heart is truly riding on one string. He holds the note just long enough with a very slight vibrato that leaves you wondering how he got the sound out of his guitar because it feels like it came from inside of you.

The cover he does of the Albert King classic, “Born Under a Bad Sign”, (and also recorded by Cream,) feature an almost R&B bass line with the blues on top. The T-Bone Walker hit, “Stormy Monday”, has a Stevie Ray Vaughn feel, with a complete mastery of the guitar fret board. He is at complete ease mixing jazz chords with lightning-speed fingering then slowing it down with a beautiful bend or two as he glides up and down the neck of the guitar. The keyboard in this song adds a moody touch and the steady bass line keeps the song from leaving earth.

Brad’s original songs, “All Kinds of a Fool”, “Slide on Over”, “Black Coffee at Sunrise” and “I’m Still Breathing” are well written, well composed and are as good as any contemporary blues songs written and performed by the big names today. “All Kinds of a Fool”, tells the story of a man losing a woman. It has a great bass line and a classic blues feel. He accents the lyrics very well with percussion and guitar. “Slide on Over” has a fast bass line (with some great bass licks) and almost a Latin feel. It is a song about seduction and he adeptly adapts his guitar to accentuate the feel of the song. “Black Coffee at Sunrise”, a song that charted on the Hit Tracks Top 100, is a rocking, rockabilly blues song with a jump feel. Brad’s vocals are excellent as is his guitar which dances along to the staccato rockabilly beat. “I’m Still Breathing”, features Joe Robb on the saxophone and has a 1940’s blues combo feel. It is a slower love song with powerful vocals that along with the saxophone, carry the song. Listening, you can almost smell the back-street smokey bar while having the last drink of the night and a longing for love.

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This CD is quite impressive. It is well produced and as a live recording it really captures the energy and talent Brad Wilson has on stage. It is an excellent cover of some classic blues songs that Brad plays with an impressive balance of classic chords and styles while adding his own guitar and arrangements. His solos and riffs would make the original writers and recording artists proud that these songs transcend time with musicians like Brad who are open to new interpretations of what were, in most cases, very basic twelve bar blues. Brad also deserves recognition for his original songs that carry forward the traditional blues sound. While most of them enter the blues rock territory, he never loses the soul of the blues. This is not an easy feat to accomplish, and even harder to make work in a song while keeping a genuine feel yet still raising the listener's blood pressure and sending them reaching for the volume control to crank it up. If you get an opportunity, go see Brad live, he is playing all over California this summer, the dates are listed on his website at www.bradwilsonlive.com. This album can be purchased as a CD or MP3 on Amazon.com, iTunes and CD Baby. It is a fine addition to any blues collection and I don't think we have heard the last of Brad Wilson. ---Kim Derr, bluesblastmagazine.com

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