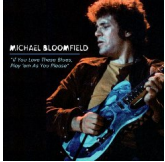


Michael Bloomfield - If You Love Those Blues, Play 'Em As You Please (1976)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 16 June 2012 17:21 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 June 2013 09:08

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1 If you love these blues Start 2 Hey, foreman Start 3 Narrative #1 / Wdia Start 4 Narrative #2 / Death Cell Rounder Blues Start 5 Narrative #3 / City girl Start 6 Narrative #4 / Kansas City Blues Start 7 Narrative #5 / Mama lion Start 8 Narrative #6 / Thrift shop rag Start 9 Narrative #7 / Death in my family Start 10 East Colorado Blues Start 11 Blue Ghost Blues Start 12 Narrative #8 / The train is gone Start 13 Narrative #9 / The altar songs Start 14 I'll overcome Start 15 I must see Jesus Start 16 Great dreams from heaven Start 17 Gonna need somebody on my bond Start 18 I am a pilgrim Start 19 Just a closer walk with thee Start 20 Have thine own way Start 21 Farther along Start 22 Peace in the valley Personnel: Michael Bloomfield, acoustic and electric guitar, banjo, piano, organ, bass, vocals; Ron Stallings, tenor saxophone; Hart McNee, baritone saxophone; Ira Kamin, organ; Eric Kriss, piano; Nick Gravenitis, guitar, vocal; Roger Troy, Doug Kilmer, bass; Dave Neditch, Tom Donlinger, drums; Woody Harris, acoustic guitar.

If You Love These Blues, Play 'Em As You Please was an unusual project for Michael Bloomfield. Although recorded as a blues guitar instructional album for Guitar Player magazine, it ended up being acclaimed as one of his finest solo recordings, of interest to both guitar players and the general listening public. Bloomfield had been in commercial and artistic decline for years prior to cutting this disc, and there's the sense that he welcomed the chance to get back to what he knew and loved the best, selecting and laying down material without having to worry about how well it would sell. That relaxed quality comes through on the performances, in which he goes through a wide assortment of electric and acoustic guitar styles, the songs specifically designed to illustrate guitar sounds associated with heroes like B.B. King, Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family, T-Bone Walker, Blind Blake, Guitar Slim, Lonnie Johnson, and others. The cuts with band backing are no-frills, straight-ahead affairs that avoid over-production, interrupted by a few showcases for Bloomfield's considerable and underrated abilities as an acoustic guitarist. His singing, as always, was merely serviceable, but suitably respectful of the material and the styles to which he was paying homage. Sprinkled throughout the program are brief, unobtrusive spoken introductions from Bloomfield himself succinctly explaining the songs, what they're examples of, and how they're being played. Long after it was made, it's still useful as a primer for aspiring blues guitarists, but also reasonably satisfying as a

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blues record on its own terms. The 2004 CD reissue on Kicking Mule adds a lot of value by tacking on the entirety of his 1979 album Bloomfield/Harris, a joint effort by Bloomfield and acoustic guitarist Woody Harris that's a nice, if peripheral, wholly instrumental excursion into gospel-oriented folk-blues. --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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