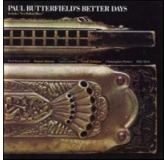


Paul Butterfield Blues Band - Better Days (1994)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 18 February 2010 15:27 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 June 2013 13:06

Paul Butterfield Blues Band - Better Days (1994)



01 New Walkin' Blues

02 Please Send Me Someone To Love

03 Broke My Baby's Heart

04 Done a Lot of Wrong Things

05 Baby Please Don't Go

06 Buried Alive in the Blues

07 Rule the Road

08 Nobody's Fault But Mine

09 Highway 28

Personnel: Ronnie Barron - Choir, Keyboards, Organ, Piano, Piano (Electric), Vocals Gary Brocks - Trombone Sam Burtis - Trombone Paul Butterfield - Harmonica, Harp, Piano (Electric), Vocals Bobby Charles - Choir, Vocals Brother Gene Dinwiddie - Sax (Tenor), Saxophone Peter Ecklund - Trumpet Amos Garrett - Bass, Guitar, Guitar (Acoustic), Vocals (Background) Howard Johnson - Horn, Sax (Baritone) Geoff Muldaur - Guitar, Guitar (Acoustic), Piano, Guitar, Vocals Maria Muldaur - Choir, Fiddle, Vocals Chris Parker - Drums J.D. Parran - Sax (Tenor), Saxophone Billy Rich - Bass David Sanborn - Sax (Alto), Saxophone Stan Shafran - Trumpet Dennis Whitted - Choir, Drums, Vocals

The Butterfield Blues Band may have maintained an eight-year reign atop the American blues-revival pecking order, but the ensemble's focus was clearly waning by the time Paul Butterfield--by then the last remaining founder--closed down the operation in the early '70s. He resurfaced in 1973 with the more versatile and democratic Better Days. Their self-titled debut displays Better Days' strengths, which include three strong singers (Butterfield, Geoff Muldaur, and Ronnie Barron) and a more pastoral sensibility that's reflective of the setting of the recording--Woodstock, New York. When Butterfield's old band tackled "Walkin' Blues" on their groundbreaking sophomore release, East-West, they attacked it with Chicago-style aggression; Better Days' version of the same song is more relaxed and easy-flowing. It says a lot about Butterfield's shifting perspective that one of the nine-song collection's highlights is a tender ballad, "Done a Lot of Wrong Things." ---Steven Stolder, Editorial Review

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"We're the only band around that's playing rooted American music," Better Days vocalist and former folkie Geoff Muldaur told an interviewer when this album was first released in 1973, and with perhaps just a handful of exceptions he was right. The band's mix of various styles of blues, from rural (Robert Johnson), to cosmopolitan (Percy Mayfield), along with hints of New Orleans R&B, boogie woogie, and early rock and country, was tremendously out of step with the pop trends of its time.

These days, of course, there are many bands doing more or less the same thing (although rarely as well), but the fact that these guys couldn't have cared less about appearing trendy is one of the reasons why BETTER DAYS sounds timeless. Another reason, of course, is world class musicianship; Muldaur, Paul Butterfield, and stupendously stylish guitarist Amos Garrett in particular come across as both relaxed and passionate. Despite their essentially formalistic approach to music making, they never sound academic or sterile. BETTER DAYS is one of the great lost albums of the '70s. ---Rovi

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