

## Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King - Blood Brothers (2008)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 10 March 2010 18:14 - Last Updated Saturday, 29 June 2013 09:11

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- 1 *My Dog's Still Walkin'* (King, Kubek) 3:52
- 2 *Don't Lose My Number* (King, Kubek) 3:33
- 3 *Flame Thrower* (Gurevich, King, Kubek) 3:16
- 4 *Stop Drinking* (Hopkins) 8:12
- 5 *Must Be Karma* (King, Kubek) 2:51
- 6 *Freezer Burn* (Collins, Iglauer, King, Kubek) 4:31
- 7 *Coleman Avenue* (King, Kubek) 5:44
- 8 *Midlife* (Crisler, Midnight Flight King, Kubek, Petty) 3:04
- 9 *Bumpy Ride* (King, Kubek, Kubek) 3:16
- 10 *That Ring Don't Mean a Thing* (King, Kubek) 4:51
- 11 *Cold Folks Boogie* (King, Kubek) 4:43
- 12 *Out on a Limb* (Crisler, King, Kubek) 3:14
- 13 *The Pleasure Was All Mine* (Gurevich, King, Kubek) 6:00
- 14 *Troubled Dreams* (King, Kubek) 3:05

Paul Jenkins / Bass

Bnois King / Guitar, Vocals

Smokin' Joe Kubek / Guitar

John Street / Keyboards

Dave Konstantin / Drums

Smokin' Joe Kubek and Bnois King have been slinging out no-nonsense, bar band-approved Texas blues-boogie since 1991. Between nonstop touring and about a dozen similar-sounding albums, little has changed for the duo besides the label affiliation. Bullseye Blues, Blind Pig, and now Alligator have helped put their music in front of a wider audience, but since the discs are pretty much interchangeable, it's little wonder their audience hasn't expanded beyond a core of hardcore fans. That's something of a badge of honor in the business they are in, though, and the very fact that King and Kubek have survived nearly two decades in the blues trenches

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without altering their basic approach is impressive. As you'd expect, that holds true on the duo's Alligator debut. It's another hourlong set of tough, robust, Texas soul-blues that cruises along and occasionally shifts into overdrive. The John Lee Hooker slow swamp groove of "Stop Drinking" explodes into a guitar dual that's about as hot as they have gotten in the studio, and "Midlife Crisis, Midnight Flight" further elaborates about getting healthy in the caffeine, nicotine, and booze-filled world where they reside. But tunes like the "I'm a Man" rewrite entitled "That Ring Don't Mean a Thing" just sound like you have heard them before with different lyrics, which you have. While that's not unusual in the blues, at least the material is performed with gusto and energy. King's soulful vocals are distinctive throughout, adding a unique quality, and Kubek's licks always sting despite the rehashed approach. The hard rock of "Troubled Times" sounds close to old Bad Company and nudges them into slightly different waters. But generally this is another quality effort from the dependable Texas twosome who play to their impressive strengths, and is as good as any for newcomers to partake in their rootsy, rocking attack. ---Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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