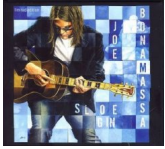


Joe Bonamassa - Sloe Gin (2007)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 11 October 2009 19:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 12 May 2018 13:39

Joe Bonamassa - Sloe Gin (2007)



01. *Ball Peen Hammer* (3:27)
02. *One Of These Days* (5:40)
03. *Seagull* (3:49)
04. *Dirt In My Pocket* (4:54)
05. *Sloe Gin* (8:13)
06. *Another Kind Of Love* (3:10)
07. *Around The Bend* (5:15)
08. *Black Night* (4:22)
09. *Jelly Roll* (2:12)
10. *Richmond* (4:31)
11. *India* (3:19)

Carmine Rojas, Bass
Rick Melick, Keyboards, Tabla
Jeff Bova, Orchestral Arrangements
Anton Fig, Percussion, Drums
Joe Bonamassa, Guitars, Liner Notes, A&R

I have long admired the talent of Joe Bonamassa and his albums have nestled quite happily here amongst the others at Leedham Towers for a while now. And they have been getting the customary periodic airings that most good albums do. But I have to be honest and say that I have only recently learned to love the blues again in a way that I once did and that has allowed me to really appreciate the quality on offer here.

“Sloe Gin” opens with ‘Ball Peen Hammer’ a song from the pen of the late American

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contemporary bluesman Chris Whitley which features some good heavy acoustic guitar as well as some good heavy blues playing as well. The intro reminds me of something else but I can't think what it is at the moment. A mid paced chugger of a track it sets the scene for what is to follow perfectly. A nice mixture of rock and blues, electric guitar and acoustic guitar, and with just a hint of country in the vocal melody. 'One of These Days' is best known as a Ten Years After track and was obviously written by Alvin Lee. The riff is very reminiscent of the old catfish blues tracks and Bonamassa plays some great delta blues riffing as well as providing a vocal in the traditional Muddy Waters or Willie Dixon style. The latter part of the song sees a tempo change and has some good jamming and soloing going on, the use of the piano is also a nice foil to the guitar. 'Dirt In My Pocket' is the first of the original compositions on the album and has a really heavy, rock like, riff to start with before it drops down into an acoustic guitar underneath the vocal only for the heavy riff to come back in again after the opening verse. The solo bridge at the mid way point is a nice mixture of acoustic guitar with some heavy notes flashed across the top. It really is a superbly structured song. 'Seagull' is a cover of a Bad Company track from their debut album. It is never easy to cover a Paul Rodgers vocal but Bonamassa makes a decent enough job of it. It is reasonably true to the original, arrangement wise, apart from being far heavier overall, especially in the chorus, and having a more electric feel than the Bad Company version. The use of the piano is also a nice touch. 'Sloe Gin' was written by Alice Cooper's producer Bob Ezrin and the late Michael Kamen and was first heard on Tim Curry's debut album back in the late seventies. It has become one of Bonamassa's trademark songs now though and this eight minute epic remains one of his most loved tunes amongst his ever increasing fan base. A slow moody atmospheric blues it features some great guitar work, which is better heard than described. The middle part where the sound effects and the drums lead into the extended musical break is a particularly good piece of arranging. It was apparently producer Kevin Shirley's idea to record the track rather than Bonamassa's.

'Another Kind Of Love' sounds very similar to The Hunter and is a classic blues stomper in the British style from the pen of John Mayall. It certainly reminds me of some of those high energy Free shows. High praise indeed. It is almost certainly the fastest and most energetic song on the album with Bonamassa throwing in some great solo flashes throughout. 'Around The Bend' is a Bonamassa co-write with Waylon Jennings of all people and marries the blues with a nice country ballad feel perfectly. Some lovely gentle guitar sounds and picking providing a perfect contrast to the power and energy of the previous track. The dirty sounding solo is a nice touch and Bonamassa also does a great job on the vocal holding together what is a very delicate melody as well as any more lauded singer could. This may even be my favourite track on the album. It is certainly my favourite melody. 'Black Night' is not the Deep Purple song but an old blues tune written by Charles Brown who along with T-Bone Walker was one of the main members of the Texas blues clean up movement that cleaned up the blues sound for white American audiences in the forties. A standard slow paced blues tune it is done here more in a Led Zeppelin style than an old time blues one. Although it is the only track here that could be officially described as an old time blues composition it doesn't sound in any way dated. Despite being written way back when it could easily pass for a modern day contemporary composition. Personally I feel it could have been extended particularly in the middle section where Bonamassa lets rip with some great blues rock soloing. John Martyn's 'Jelly Roll' is up next and

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provides a nice quirky break from the more standard blues and rock sound of the rest of the album with its fast paced folk feel and the use of the Resonator guitar. 'Richmond' is another original and displays Bonamassa's gentle guitar side as well as his ability to hold a nice country tinged melody in the vocal. Along with 'Around The Bend' it is probably the best melody on the album and shows that Bonamassa is far more than just an out and out blues guitar slinger. In fact I could imagine this getting plenty of airplay on the rockier country stations such is its feel. The heavy acoustic intro of the final track 'India' immediately puts you in mind of III era Led Zeppelin, which is of course no bad thing, and is a nice instrumental end to the album.

"Sloe Gin" is the seventh full length album from Joe Bonamassa and the second to be produced by Kevin Shirley. It spent a considerable amount of time at the number one spot on Billboard's Blues chart and shows that Bonamassa really has legitimate claims to be regarded as the leader in the field of current day blues rock crossover performers. Any lover of this type of music should welcome this album, and Joe Bonanmassa, into their lives as soon as they possibly can. ---martinleedham.wordpress.com

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