

Joe Bonamassa – You and Me (2006)

Written by bluesever

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1. *High Water Everywhere*
2. *Bridge To Better Days*
3. *Asking Around For You*
4. *So Many Roads*
5. *I Don't Believe*
6. *Tamp Em Up Solid*
7. *Django*
8. *Tea For One*
9. *Palm Trees Helicopters And Gasoline*
10. *Your Funeral And My Trial*
11. *Tore Down*

Bass – Carmine Rojas Drums – Jason Bonham Guitar, Vocals – Joe Bonamassa
Orchestrated By, Programmed By – Jeff Bova Piano, Organ, Tambourine – Rick Melick

Despite his statement in the liner notes that "In an era where it is best to play it safe, I chose to take a risk...", there isn't much surprising or risky about young guitarist Joe Bonamassa's fifth studio album. Most of his previous releases have mixed blues covers with his own originals, all played with a rocker's attitude, volume and less-than-subtle approach. This one follows suit and even though he goes on to say that he "wanted to make a blues album, not a rock album that has blues on it," as in the past; it's impossible to claim that he has succeeded with *You & Me*. That doesn't make this a bad or disappointing disc; quite the contrary, it's a solid blues-rock release and arguably his best work to date. But as early as the second track, an original rocker titled "Bridge to Better Days," Bonamassa takes off on an early Free/Savoy Brown-styled stomper. Things settle down and get more rootsy on the following two slow blues tracks, although a lovely Bonamassa original, "Asking Around for You," adds strings, not exactly a touch most would associate with pure blues. Regardless, it's extremely effective and when the strings return on a nine-and-a-half-minute cover of Led Zeppelin's "Tea for One," it is a spine-tingling experience and possibly this album's finest moment. Drummer Jason Bonham, who is excellent throughout, brings additional authenticity to the song his dad first played on.

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Bonomassa unplugs for a few mid-disc tracks, including a cover of "Tamp 'Em Up Solid" (oddly credited to Ry Cooder but typically known as a traditional piece, even on Cooder's version). Twelve-year-old harmonica whiz L.D. Miller does his best John Popper imitation on a hyperactive version of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Your Funeral and My Trial" (someone needs to inform the kid that playing lots of notes really fast doesn't mean he has soul), and the instrumental titled "Django" shows that Bonamassa has been listening to Gary Moore's "Parisienne Walkways." It adds up to a quality Bonamassa disc that will please existing fans and might bring some new ones into the fold, but it's also one that doesn't take the chances that he claims might push the guitarist into uncharted territory. ---Hal Horowitz, AllMusic Review

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