Livin' Blues – Ram Jam Josey (1973)



A1 Dizzy Busy Blues Man 4:32 A2 I'm Walkin' 2:53 A3 Ram Jam Josey 3:45 A4 Gamble On 3:15 A5 Poinsetta Petal 4:03 B1 Isabella 3:16 B2 Hobo Joe 4:42 B3 I'm Coming Home 6:42 B4 The Great Grand Father 2:48 B5 Empty Glasses 1:59 Bass Guitar – Ruud Van Buuren Drums – Kenny Lamb Guitar – Teddy Oberg Harmonica – John La Grand Keyboards [Additional] – Pete Wingfield Vocals – Nico Christiansen

This is the last album released by the original Livin' Blues. The band was plagued by constant line-up changes behind the drum kit that damaged the morale of the band, especially the relationship between the core group of guitarist Ted Oberg, vocalist Nicko Christiansen and harmonica-player John Lagrand. This led them to begin to grow apart during the recording of the previous album, 1972's Rocking at the Tweed Mill, affecting their ability to write songs together. They would have split up after Tweed Mill if not for encouragement from the producer of that album, Mike Vernon, to keep going. (Not to mention their record contract demanded one more album). With the band lacking inspiration, Vernon offered to help with the writing as well as bringing in Kenny Lamb to take care of the drumming and help with the song-writing. They re-entered the studio in October 1973 and recorded this album, Ram Jam Josey, in 8 days. on release, It was not as successful as previous efforts and after touring for several more months, the original band decided to call it quits in 1974. They would reunite later that year to great success sans-Christiensen.

Ram Jam Josey shows the band expanding beyond straight blues rock and moving into mainstream rock and boogie rock territory while keeping a blues element intact. Elements of funk can even be found in some of Oberg's guitar playing. While still a consistently enjoyable effort for what it is, it is a small step down in quality and energy from previous albums. The songwriting is decent, despite the absence of any Oberg/Christiensen collaborations and Kenny Lamb picks up some of the slack, helping to write the opening track "Dizzy Busy Bluesman" as well as the title track. The one single from the album, "Poinsetta Petal", was written solely by Mike Vernon. The two cover songs, Fats Domino's "I'm Walking" and Bo Diddley's "The Great

Grandfather" are done quite well. Ram Jam Josey is worth having and listening to despite the fractious state that the band is in because judging by the music itself, you really wouldn't know it. A respectable swan-song for the original Livin' Blues. ---yoyomama1, rateyourmusic.com

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