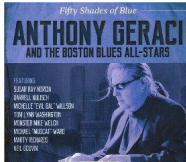


Anthony Geraci and The Boston Blues All-Stars - Fifty Shades of Blue (2015)

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01. *Everything I Do Is Wrong* (3:23) 02. *Fifty Shades of Blue* (3:27) 03. *Sad but True* (3:55)
04. *Heard That Tutwiler Whistle Blow* (5:20) 05. *If You Want to Get to Heaven* (4:19) 06. *Don't Keep Me Waiting* (4:12) 07. *The Blues Never Sleeps* (3:15) 08. *Too Late for Coffee* (2:55) 09. *Diamonds and Pearls* (4:12) 10. *Cry a Million Tears* (5:59) 11. *In the Quicksand, Again* (3:12)
12. *Your Turn to Cry* (3:56) 13. *Blues for David Maxwell* (6:06) Anthony Geraci (piano, Hammond organ) Monster Mike Welch (guitar) Michael "Mudcat" Ward (acoustic bass, electric bass) Marty Richards (drums) Darrell Nulisch (vocals, harmonica) Toni Lynn Washington (vocals) Michelle 'Evil Gal' Willson (vocals) Neil Gouvin (drums)

If you're a true blues lover and the name Anthony Geraci isn't familiar to you, then just think of acts like Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters or Sugar Ray & The Bluetones. Geraci was an original member of both and provided the signature keyboard sound so important to each band. He has also played with numerous legendary musicians such as BB King, Big Mama Thornton, Duke Robillard, Big Joe Turner, Hubert Sumlin, John Hammond, and countless others you're going to recognize as well. And if those credentials aren't enough to convince you, then listen to his latest release *Fifty Shades Of Blue* and all doubt will go right out the window.

Just take a look at the people working on the album with him and it's quite obvious why they're called the Boston Blues All Stars. This is an assortment of some of the very best blues musicians to be found in Boston, the Northeast, the East Coast, or anywhere else for that matter. This is an impressive line-up indeed, with people like Mike Welch on guitar, Mudcat Ward on bass, Darrell Nulisch on harmonica and vocals, and a handful of talented singers including Michell "Evil Gal" Willson and Toni Lynn Washington. In other words, there was no fooling around when they put together this cast. Can you say, "Wow?"

Fifty Shades Of Blue is an outstanding collection of songs, all written by Geraci. He sets a

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variation of moods through the album that are perfectly presented in each of their formats. I am consumed with the beauty of "Don't Keep Me Waiting" with vocals from Norcia and Geraci laying down some of the finest soft piano work this side of the late Charles Brown. Norcia and Michelle Willson provide some laughs behind the kinkiness of the title track "Fifty Shades Of Blue," and there is a country-like, or perhaps maybe a little Warren Zevon kind of delivery, on "Too Late For Coffee" (too late for coffee, too early for beer . . .). Norcia and Geraci seem to pull from a Ray Charles influence on "Your Turn To Cry" and it comes across nicely, impacted even more by a harmonica solo from the former. On the instrumental "In The Quicksand, Again" Geraci trades driving piano matched to a tee with ferocity from Welch on guitar. The album closes with yet another instrumental, the lengthy six-plus-minute "Blues For David Maxwell." It is a beautiful tribute to the late pianist and quite moving, again with the emotional keyboard work enhanced strongly by Welch's tear-inducing string work and the rhythms of Ward and drummer Marty Richards. The song starts out quite bluesy and closes with jazz overtones. Outstanding, and the essential way to close this strong collection.

Fifty Shades Of Blue is an album that I'd suggest running out and picking up. It just may be one of the best blues recordings of the year. Can I smell Blues Music Awards with this one. I surely would not be surprised! --- cascadebluesassociation.org

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