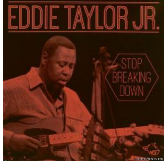


Eddie Taylor Jr. - Stop Breaking Down (2015)

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01. *I'm A King Bee* - 3:10 02. *Ghetto Woman* - 5:54 03. *Kiddio* - 3:58 04. *Baby What You Want Me To Do (O* - 4:51 05. *The Sky Is Crying* - 5:05 06. *I Got To Find My Baby (Before* - 3:11 07. *Baby Please Come Home* - 3:19 08. *32-20 Blues* - 2:17 09. *You Gotta Pay The Price* - 4:38 10. *Low Down Dirty Shame (Oooh-Wee* - 4:14 11. *Whiskey Headed Woman* - 2:52 12. *Stop Breaking Down* - 4:35
Eddie Taylor Jr. - Guitar, Vocals Greg McDaniel - Bass Tony Palmer - Guitar Timothy Taylor - Drums Bob Waleso – Harp Harmonica Hinds - Harp

It's been three long, hard years since Eddie Taylor Jr. released an album. During that time, he endured a painful trip through the blues wilderness, experiencing health problems of his own as well as the death of a son which he experienced health problems and the death of a son on the mean streets of Chicago. But he bounces back with vigor on this rock-solid disc on Germany's Wolf Records imprint.

Still a relatively young man in blues terms and heir to the legacy of his father, who was both Jimmy Reed's guitar player and a superstar in the genre himself, Eddie Jr. was born in 1971 and envisioned himself as a rapper. It wasn't until after Eddie Sr.'s death in the mid-'80s that he began teaching himself how to play guitar, using his father's recordings as a guide.

Now in his late 40s and with six prior releases on the Wolf label, Eddie Jr. is firmly established as one of the few folks left in the city who deliver traditional Chicago blues, tempered by a strong taste of Windy City soul. Most of the 10 covers and two originals here were recorded on the shores of Lake Michigan backed by Tony Palmer (guitar), Greg McDaniel (bass), brother Tim Taylor (drums) and Bob Waleso and Harmonica Hinds (harp). The other two were laid down in Vienna, Austria, in a stripped-down format with Eddie aided solely by Hinds on reeds.

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If you're familiar with Taylor's recordings, you'll find his play a little different on this one. In an attempt to win and retain a younger audience, he's modernized his style a bit and enlisted the aid of several guitar effects he hadn't used previously.

Stop Breaking Down kicks off with a loping cover of Slim Harpo's "I'm A King Bee." Eddie's rich voice fits perfectly atop a chart with true Swamp feel. The B.B. King/Dave Clark classic "Ghetto Woman" follows with Taylor delivering a crisp, clean single-note guitar line as he sings about a faithful woman waiting for her man to come home. His pedal work gives the mid-tune solo a contemporary feel while he stays comfortably in format.

Next up is a version of Brook Benton's "Kiddio," once a minor blues hit for Chicago slide guitar master John Littlejohn. It swings sweetly as Eddie's voice lilts from verse to verse. "Baby What You Want Me To Do," a song his father played regularly behind Reed, follows before a funky take on Elmore James' "The Sky Is Crying" and a new, uptempo and flashy arrangement of the traditional "I Got To Find My Baby (Before That Evenin' Sun Go Down)."

Two originals with an old-time feel — "Baby Please Come Home" and "You Gotta Pay The Price" — sandwich a modern stab at Robert Johnson's "32-20 Blues" before a cover of the traditional "Low Down Dirty Shame (Oooh-Wee Baby)." Two more covers — Tommy McClennan's "Whiskey Headed Woman" and Johnson's "Stop Breaking Down" — conclude the set.

While it's true that most of the material here is a collection of tried-and-true blues warhorses, Eddie Jr. has proven once again that he's a standard bearer for the Chicago blues tradition. This disc might have been better if it had contained more new songs. But if you're a traditionalist, you'll enjoy this one. I did. ---Marty Gunther, bluesblastmagazine.com

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