

Slam Allen - Feel These Blues (2015)

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1 *Feel These Blues* 4:09 2 *All Because Of You* 4:00 3 *In September* 2:56 4 *The Blues Is Back* 3:25 5 *Baby Please Don't You Go* 3:46 6 *35 Miles Outside Of Memphis* 4:14 7 *World Don't Stop Turning* 4:17 8 *Can't Break Away From That Girl* 3:13 9 *When The Blues Come Around* 3:53 10 *That's Where You Are* 4:21 11 *You're Wrong* 3:53 12 *Purple Rain* 7:16
Harrison 'Slam' Allen – guitar, vocals John Ginty – keyboards Jeff Anderson – bass Dan Fadel - drums

Harrison 'Slam' Allen spent nine years as guitarist and vocalist with legendary harp player James Cotton and played on Cotton's Grammy nominated comeback album "Giant" in 2011. Since then Slam has gone out on his own with the moniker of 'The Soulworking Man'. Slam wrote all the material apart from one cover; the album was recorded in NYC and produced by Ben Elliott.

The title track is an odd choice to open proceedings as it is a pretty generic blues-rock/funk piece with a repetitive chorus line. "All Because Of You" is a far stronger song in a soul-blues vein with some very nice guitar work from Slam. The gentle "In September" further mines the soul seam before "The Blues Is Back" ups the tempo with some guitar playing that picks up on all three Kings and Albert Collins, Slam telling us all that the blues is never far away as we all get them. It's a solid piece of guitar playing that demonstrates Slam's abilities rather well. "Baby Please Don't You Go" has a funky core riff that propels the song along well with John's organ to the fore. "35 Miles Outside Of Memphis" has a classic Memphis hook and lyric that recalls Edwin Starr's "25 Miles".

Slam gives us a slow blues with some torrid guitar on "World Don't Stop Turning" where John's organ accompaniment is also an integral part of the performance. "Can't Break Away From That Girl" returns to the soul –blues vein with some choppy rhythm work from Slam in Steve

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Cropper/Stax mode. This solid piece of soul music works well but would have really taken off with the addition of some horn charts. More choppy rhythm work brings in “When The Blues Come Around” which also finds Slam using the wah-wah pedal in his solo.

Some of the PR notices describe Slam as “Otis Redding with a blazing blues guitar” and “That’s Where You Are” fits that description well. The rhythm work is again very Stax-like, Slam’s vocal certainly has touches of Otis and the emotional chorus works very well: “I’m gonna follow the sun, I’m gonna follow the stars. I’m gonna follow my soul ‘cos I know that’s where you are”. “You’re Wrong” is a slow shuffle with another good vocal from Slam before he closes the album with an extended reading of Prince’s “Purple Rain”, a song that seems to be becoming something of a go-to cover – this reviewer recently saw Vasti Jackson perform it at a festival and it is a favorite show closer for English blues-rocker Aynsley Lister. The song provides a very good vehicle for the band members to show their abilities and for Slam to demonstrate both his vocal and guitar chops.

There is nothing startlingly new here but several very good soul-blues tunes struck a chord with this reviewer and will probably do so with others – definitely worth a listen. ---
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