

PROPERGANDA

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STEPHEN DALE PETIT

Picking up a nod from EC, the new kid in town is already vying for the guitar slingers crown...

Stephen Dale Petit is an articulate spokesman for the blues who is mostly content to let his guitar do the talking. He's clearly a phenomenal technician, but it doesn't end there as the 15 tracks on his debut CD also demonstrate tremendous feel. His trademark sound is humbucker fat, rich in harmonic distortion and overdriven sustain, giving him all the juice he needs to wring every ounce of emotion from the stinging strings.

Given his guitar playing ability and the album's title, it's perhaps not surprising that most of the tracks contained on this CD are instrumental. What is surprising is the variety that he is able to create with crunching riffs giving way to some moments of surprising tenderness.

Petit has an entertaining and informative website that offers much of the story behind this record. Significantly he highlights the British Blues boom of the 60s, with its guitar heroes, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Peter Green and Jimmy Page, as being just as important to the history of the blues as the originators they sought to imitate. Britain's love affair with the blues certainly revitalised a music that was somewhat undervalued in the land of its birth. In doing so, a generation of hip young guitar slingers also developed a new style and took the blues to places it had never been before.

It's clearly to his credit that Petit can count Clapton and original blues boomer and Pretty Things leader Phil May amongst his fanbase. His reputation seems to be on the rise with a session for Paul Jones on Radio 2 and glowing notices

from Classic Rock and Blues Matters magazines.

Sacramento gets the CD off to a soulful start and serves notice of the incendiary playing to come. *Alexis Corner Says* has a determinedly old school feel about it with the double tracked passages bringing subtle variations to the sound. These sonic gear-shifts continue through *Crack Whore*, which sets off in riff-tacular style towards a hip-hop styled breakdown, before the guitar winds up again, lifting the track towards a spectacular conclusion.

The album's one cover version, an instrumental reading of Bill Withers' *Aint No Sunshine* is stark, solo guitar extemporisation on the melody of that song, which slows the pace. Other slower numbers are more lush and let Stephen show off his classic rock leanings, like the big ballads *10 Year Reflections* and *Told You So*, but especially *Pure* which swells towards a climax.

7 Cent Cotton and *Percy's Thumb* have something of the Jimmy Page about them. The former is also the only track with a proper vocal on it, throwing in references to serpent's teeth, selling souls and shaking down the mountains in great blues style.

News has just reached the reviewer that the original pressing of *Guitararama* has sold out and that Stephen has had to get more CDs manufactured. His DIY approach and non-stop busking are also to be praised and the new CDs come in a variety of hues, but of course, mainly the blues.

"Check out this guy now,
before he becomes huge"
BLUES MATTERS



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Guitararama
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