

Guitar Red

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Guitar Red is a street musician who plys his trade daily "in and around the Square in Decatur, Georgia" – and on this, his debut CD, he delivers a lowdown set of downhome blues that I assume are indicative of his street performances.

Backing himself on guitar and clavinet - with Chris Francisco's bass as his only accompaniment – Red reminds me of artists like Super Chikan, who show no compromises in delivering their own brand of "gutbucket" blues.

Red opens with "Box Car No 9" – a train blues with perfunctory backing replete with crowing vocals and the obligatory "ooh-oohs". "Lips Poked Out" is a jook-joint shuffle with declamatory vocals that remind me of a lowdown version of Smokey Smothers – the same influence melded with elements of Blind Lemon Jefferson are also evident on the doomladen "Ain't Got Nobody But Myself".

"Three Legged Dog Blues" is a sprightly rocker – "Chain Gang Blues" is a morose, but compelling, dirge a la Short Stuff Macon - whilst the title track will appeal to "punk-bluesters" with it's eccentric vocals, hip-hop and rap sensibilities, and seriously funky guitar and bass.

"Out Of My Mind" is an anguished gutbucket blues with an apt title – "Decatur Boy Blues" is a funky "I Just Wanna Make Love To You" derivative – "I Believe" is a catchy blues that I am sure gets bystanders' feet tapping – whilst "Song About A Jimi Hendrix Song" is both heartfelt and anguished with it's moaned vocals and hypnotic guitar (I will leave you to work out what the song is).

There is also a "hidden track" where Red sums up his musical philosophy about how the blues gives him the opportunity to express himself, be creative and "praise god" before launching into a wild blues that sums up this set.

Eccentric, wild, uncomplicated, compelling downhome blues guaranteed to bring a smile to your face ... I love it!

www.backspacerecords.com

Rating 9

Mick Rainsford