



Rich DelGrosso & Jonn Del Toro Richardson – Time Slips On By
Mandolin Blues MB10002

“Time Slips On By” can only be described as “blues manna from heaven” for all lovers of “traditional” blues – as it melds the talents of mandolinist Rich DelGrosso and guitarist Jonn Del Toro Richardson on a set that pays tribute to artists as diverse as Yank Rachell, Johnny Young, Robert Nighthawk, Albert and Freddie King.

Although the music is “traditional,” the songs are all originals with DelGrosso adding a more modern edge by playing an electrified resonator mandolin as opposed to the jug and string band mandolinists who inspired him – whilst also playing a vintage Gibson mandola on two tracks. Whilst DelGrosso will be familiar due to his solo work, Richardson will be more familiar for his work with Dianna Greenleaf, Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin and Otis Taylor – and his achievement in winning a Grammy with Pinetop Perkins and also winning the Albert King guitarist award.

They are joined on this set by a stellar line-up of Texas musicians including Carl Owens (drums/percussion), Ed Starkey (bass), Joel Guzman (accordion), Nick Connolly (keyboards), Sonny Boy Terry (harmonica), Fiona Boyes (backing vocals) and the Texas Horns (Kaz Kazanoff, John Mills and Al Gomez on tenor sax, baritone sax and trumpet respectively).

The set opens with “Baby Do Wrong” – a brooding, head-shaking, Muddy styled blues played on Mandola and bottleneck slide with DelGrosso’s gravelly vocals intensifying the mood and feel. This mood is maintained on the Chicago styled “She’s Sweet” where the mandola is perfectly complemented by Sonny Boy Terry’s superb harp conjuring up a mélange of Muddy and Sonny and Brownie.

The title track is a deeply soulful blues fired by Richardson’s emotive soloing on his ’59 Strat – whilst on “Hard To Live With”, his vintage Silvertone pleads with his lady, adding a modern touch to DelGrosso’s Rachell styled mandolin on this Estes influenced blues. “Mandolin Man” takes Jimmy Reed back to the country with Terry providing more wonderful harp, Connolly “rattling” away on piano and DelGrosso conjuring up images of Rachell and Charlie McCoy.

“Katalin” has an “Anna Lee” feel; its Nighthawk influences given a Tex-Mex flavour with Guzman’s plaintive accordion fills – a feel that is repeated and accentuated with the interplay between mandolin and accordion on the wistful “Summertime Is Here.” Richardson steps into the spotlight on the Freddie King influenced “Where’s Laura?,” “A Gig Is A Gig” and “The Real Deal” – “Laura” being a jazz inflected instrumental fired by organ and horns, “Gig” being a bouncy blues replete with honky-tonk piano, whilst “Deal” is a brooder with baleful horns – all three showing Richardson as a master of tone and phrasing.

Add in the “Brass And The Blues” styled “Shotgun Blues” – the brooding “Baby Please” – the wistful “I Wish I’d Heard” – and another Freddie King styled instrumental, “Good Rockin’ Johnny” (I assume a tribute to Johnny Young) but played on a mandolin – and you have what I can only describe as a superb set. (www.mandolinblues.com)

Rating 10

- Mick Rainsford