



RICH DELGROSSO AND JONN DEL TORO RICHARDSON

Time Slips On By

Mandolin Blues – MB10002

Blues mandolin virtuoso Rich DelGrosso is both heir and champion of a blues tradition unknown to many fans. But men like Howard Armstrong, Yank Rachell, and Johnny Young applied their blues sensibilities to the normally non-blues instrument. Yet on his latest release, *Time Slips On By*, DelGrosso doesn't merely echo his mentors. Together with guitarist Jonn Del Toro Richardson and several other fine East Texas-based musicians, DelGrosso uses the inspiration of his instrumental forbears to forge a unique sound somewhere between blues, rock, and roots, with a healthy dose of Tex-Mex thrown in to keep things interesting.

All of the 14 tracks are originals, written either by DelGrosso or Richardson, who likewise alternate lead vocals. On the opener, *Baby Do Wrong*, (the one song credited to both) DelGrosso's moody intro, picked on a vintage mandola, quickly gives way to a raucous dancehall stomp fueled by both he and Richardson's furious licks. On the title track, the Texas Horns—consisting of Mark “Kaz” Kazanoff on tenor sax, John Mills on baritone sax, and Al Gomez on trumpet—lend a soul-blues flavor to Richardson's tale of loneliness and missed opportunity. The loping roadhouse ode *Mandolin Man* finds DelGrosso name-checking Rachell, Young, Charlie McCoy, and W. C. Handy while firmly placing himself in their shoes—“Cause I'm a mandolin man/Give me eight strings/I'll play the blues like nobody can.” This is no mere boast; he lets his fingers do the talking, and his beautiful, clear tone and fluid technique are a delight. The harmonica work of Sonny Boy Terry adds a nice dash of Chicago cool to the mix.

The *conjunto*-tinged *Summertime Is Here* is a lovely change of pace; Joel Guzman's accordion solos shimmer like desert heat. *Shotgun Blues*, based on the Rachell-penned song of the same name, is updated with swinging brass and Nick Connolly's sultry keyboards. Percussionist Carl Owens and bassist Ed Starkey lay down a smooth, deep groove on *Hard To Live With*, allowing both DelGrosso and Richardson ample space for their extended solos. “I know I'm hard to live with/But I'm easy to love,” DelGrosso purrs, and the latter of these two sentiments certainly applies to this disc.

—Melanie Young