

REVIEWS FOR NOT REALLY THE BLUES

REVIEW FROM GRAEME DAVEY, APRIL 2004

Not Really the Blues...more like bliss!

Dean Thomas has produced a fine collection of dirty swamp cowboy twang that demonstrates years of devotion to six taught steel wires on an old wooden box...and I like it. 'Bad News Blues' and 'Recipe #2' are cool club grooves worthy of a track on Eric Clapton-unplugged. The ultimate question arises on track eight [which is selected for 'endless - repeat' on my CD player].

'Are You Tough Enough' with it's haunting swamp thump and syncopated lead drift reaches down into the souls of mankind, posing ethical and rational heart felt inescapable decisions. The spirit of The Beatles' George Harrison lifts the emotional cry of the chorus... Truly excellent.

Graeme Davey.

REVIEW FROM RHYTHMS MAGAZINE, FEB 2004

As the album title suggests, this may not really be a blues music release. However, the Sydney-made CD's semi-acoustic content is individual and creative. It may not be particularly derivative of any other specific genre either, though elements of blues, country, world and jazz are intertwined. A singer-songwriter with polished guitar picking skills, Thomas plays acoustic and National guitars and sings like Eric Clapton doing JJ Cale. Doug Weaver adds some spice to the 34 minute set on electric and acoustic guitars, Dobro and some vocals. Other instruments featured include bass guitar, drums, congas, tuba and didgeridoo. Although the eleven songs aren't crafted in a way that calls for inspired comping and soloing, the players are sensitive to the material and they all blend into a cool, laid back groove.

The title track, very much in the mould of Muddy Waters' 'I can't be Satisfied' is probably the bluesiest cut on the CD. 'World Blues', 'Recipe for the Blues' and its instrumental reprise 'Recipe #2' are in a similar bag while the haunting 'Tough Enough' and 'Man of the Run' - a tale of early convict days - get down to business with a solid back

beat. On 'Yin Yang' the band picks up the pace and stretches out, but Thomas's songs mainly rely on their strong lyrical content for much of their appeal. Producers Thomas and Weaver shoot for a smooth, easy listening sound with subtle dynamics, slotting in nicely for a late-night chill-out. Not Really the Blues...bringing it's own original, Aussie-flavoured contribution to the local blues and roots scene.
Al Hensley.

REVIEW FROM GUITARIST AUSTRALIA, APRIL 2005

The title of this album is very apt. Really The Blues probably wouldn't bring such a smile to your face.

Overall the album is exceptionally well balanced, with some extremely tasty acoustic chops and noodles seasoned expertly with some electric leads and served up with Thomas' highly diverse vocal. The humour, both lyrically and musically, makes for a listening experience that is light hearted at times and mesmerising at others.

From the Tuba's bouncy goose-step in I tried So Hard to the brooding Are You Tough Enough, via the languidly despondent Woman I Love, Thomas invites us along a road which, although familiar in places, is definitely somewhere we haven't been.

Thomas' delight in the guitar is contagious and his mastery over its dynamic range, perfectly coupled with his vocal work, makes for an effortless and relaxed feel.

The compositions are sparkling and original, while still giving nods to a diverse range of masters.
Gun Arvidssen.