

BLUES FOR SALE

of Zakk Wylde and Jared James Nichols' school of hard rock will go for this big time: listeners of a nervous disposition may wish to turn the volume down a notch.

Leon Blanc

Gus Glynn: The Return Of The Captain

Own label

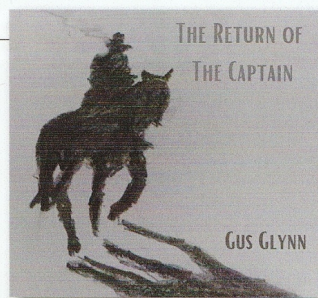
Gus Glynn takes a break from fronting his excellent blues/rock band to bring us a neat solo set full of fine self-penned songs. As befits an original and inspired troubadour there are genres a-plenty here but the real roots still show. Born and raised in Galway but long-based in Cheshire, Glynn's Irish influence underpins much here as he dips into an eclectic mix of folk, country and blues to propel songs which have depth and originality.

A few names could slip off the tongue when considering his likely influences but they wouldn't tell the full story. However, anyone lucky enough to be familiar with the late great Terry Clarke, an English writer of wonderful songs, many exploring his own Celtic roots, would sense what seems a common aspiration.

Opener 'Connemara Heart' is a jumping country-bluesy affair with Glynn adding mandolin to boost an already pleasing and dexterous mix. He then adds neat lead guitar over strident acoustic rhythm to a slightly Knopfer-esque 'Salt Water.' Regular bandmate Pete Attwood adds occasional bass on this collection, underpinning well where necessary.

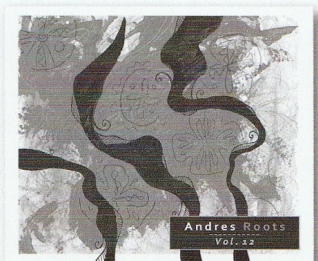
'Louise' is at once beguiling and thoughtfully deceptive before becoming almost a *tour de force*. A laid-back vocal and guitar arrangement comes with the album's first use of drums, this ostensibly more solid backing then takes a back seat as the song builds steadily but with pace, Glynn's powerful strumming forming a powerful percussion all its own.

The double-pronged guitar approach is a winner throughout particularly on 'The Divide,' the evocative lead playing here offering a definite album highlight. Twin guitars then gently flow and cascade through 'Wide Open Stream,' surely one intended to enhance an Irish landscape. 'The Return Of The Captain' is a lament for "a fractured land", a final chapter, the protagonist a



spent force, laid low by exhaustion and an overriding sense of futility. A wonderful song and surely one to lay before Christy Moore.

John Bottomley



Andres Roots: Vol. 12

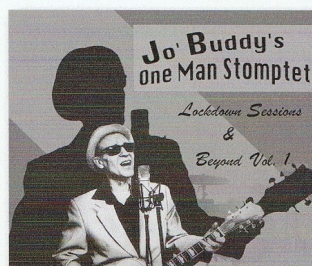
Roots Art

Estonia's finest, and one of the prime acoustic blues instrumental players, Andres here collects a largely unplugged set of material previously issued on the *Afternoon* CD EP, some new to the digital format from the vinyl *Waiting Around* EP and previously unissued material from a theatre production and others recorded towards the end of 2022. The result is a surprisingly cohesive release.

All the music is firmly rooted in the blues of course – usually the blues of Mississippi too – though a track like 'Starbuck Theme' has something of a Hawaiian tinge and 'Dromedary' contains some delicate and attractive kora-like playing – neither of which should be unfamiliar sounds for roots music lovers. Then again, the closing 'Sherwood' sounds like it could evolve into a classic rock item. 'Birdsong Thing' has a throbbing rhythm on the electric guitar and the expected excellent slide playing, and the other amplified number, 'Waiting Around', is a slow, deliberate Chicago-flavoured number that could easily be worked up into a band performance. Much of the set is much quieter though: try a composition like the folk- and jazz-tinged 'Hawk's Out With His Axe', the longest number here running to just a second short of five

minutes. Mind you, Andres also turns in a nice Chuck Berry tribute with 'Bye Bye Berry' and 'Yuletide Blues' is fine festive fun. That's just to pick out a few moments of a set that contains plenty of good music. Andres is always worth a listen and this lovely set confirms that yet again.

Norman Darwen



Jo' Buddy's One Man Stomp: Lockdown Sessions & Beyond Volume 1

Ram-Bam

One spin-off from the recent pandemic was the proliferation of "lockdown albums" – frequently acoustic-based, mournful affairs, with songs about isolation, loneliness and other dystopian matters. Fortunately, Jo' Buddy's take steers clear of the more maudlin aspects and delivers an upbeat DIY album. Jo' Buddy (aka Jussi Raulamo) is a Finnish bluesman who currently divides his time between his homeland and the UK, where he can be found gigging in and around London. He has been performing for forty years and has a back catalogue stretching back over thirty, both as a solo artist and with various collaborations. All the instruments here are played by Buddy, with the exception of harmonica provided by sometime musical collaborator JD Harmo (Julien D'Imperio) and Finnish sax player Masa Orpana.

The 10-song set kicks off with an instrumental 'Kingston Street Dance' showcasing his US West-Coast blues guitar (in the style of Junior Watson) underpinned by some nice Fats Domino piano chords. 'Jo' Buddy's Biznes' is a brisk shuffle with organ flourishes, snappy guitar lines and distinctive vocals. 'Holler With The Soul' is reminiscent (in a good way) of something that Rick Holmstrom would come up with, complete with a neat piano solo. 'If I Could Love Somebody' slips into B.B. King style swing-blues before 'I'll

Be There By Your Side' slows proceedings and is the first to feature Julien's soulful harmonica. The simple rhythm of 'Never Find Another' has a Slim Harpo feel. 'Alphabet Boogie Woogie' has clever narration-style vocals, 'Going Back To New Orleans' an appropriate Fats Domino feel, whilst 'You Stayed Out All Night Long' is a slower-paced lament. The album rounds off with a final instrumental 'Lakewood Walk' that has a distinct essence of Bill Doggett about it, with the guitar and sax taking it in turns to trade solo lines.

If this is your first time of listening to Buddy, it might take a couple of spins to tune in to his distinguishing vocal delivery – but it's very much his and no one else's. This is a good showcase of his prowess as a multi-instrumentalist and songwriter.

Russ Cottee



The Vagaband: Beautiful World

Eggsong

A new release from this collective, with (at first gander) Jose McGill as the driving force; a singer, a songwriter, and a dab hand on the fretboard and keys too. I was drawn to this due to the involvement of two other musicians; namely singer Yve Mary Barwood Brook and guitarist Mark Howes. Others featured are a gathering of many, and the instrumentation is wide and encompassing, including Mellotron, fiddle, pedal steel, mandolin, flute, Dobro and harmonica.

'I'm Not For You' is a duet with Jose and Yve's call and response country-tinged vocals. If you need a hole to plop this in, think Americana, heavy on "Nashville" and "West Coast" too. 'Desdemona' has a great hook (love the middle eight, could be in the charts of old), and a fabulous segue into 'Avalon' (spot the join). I'm getting a huge *Rumours* era Mac feel, 'tis the vocals and the