

SMALL BLUES TRAP

SMALL BLUES TRAP - TIME TRICKS

Small Blues Trap have been around for quite some time and deserve notoriety in the blues world. They hail from Greece, so being in the US I have never seen them live. But if you want to hear blues music brought to the present without the clichéd riffs, then bend your ear this way. With every album they release there is growth and musical maturity. And "Time Tricks" really keeps their own sound while bringing in other musical influences all based in the roots of the musical dirt.

"Time Tricks" has the solid blues licks of Paul Karapiperis' tumbleweed chasin' harmonica and Panagiotis Daras' oh such a juicy meaty morsel of guitar work. These two also play the percussion on the album. That is not a bad thing. The two appear to play their instruments as if they are speaking to each other; it is a musical conversation they create. Paul and Panagiotis have used their musical inspirations and speak with new tongues on this album.

The biggest influence on this album that sets it apart is the sound of the spaghetti westerns and Ennio Morricone's soundtracks. Ennio was a genius. He evoked feelings with his music more than many blues artists today. Why not churn those sounds into the blues world? "Time Tricks" is just that, a journey in time through seven tracks. This is not an album to be played in the daylight. It opens with the dark and brooding "Gamblin'." Think of the smell of a dusty wooden whiskey-soaked saloon table with sweaty men spittin' tobacco and you might get an idea of where this song lands on the sonic meter.

"This Little Tune" follows up with a guitar melody that has a slight Egyptian tilt with black and white shadows of a film noir featuring Edward G. Robinson. It's slow moving, eerie, with a yearning to find a destination but never settling in one place. The title track, "Time Tricks," is no hurry to get anywhere, but to take you on an audible adventure. This is a dark alley song that Orson Welles would have created if he were on the scene today. It reeks of two A.M. smoky brick faced buildings with water running past the dumpster, rats scurrying, and nothing good coming out of those shadows in the alley. You can feel the fear in your gut, but can't move because the song won't let you until it is ready.

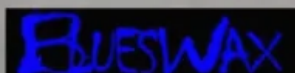
Now after all those desperate feelings from the first three songs, Small Blues Trap decides to get a little funky on "I Wish I Could Fly." I can see this song being played in Huggy Bear's 'restaurant' in Starsky and Hutch. The old 1970's juke box would welcome it with its avocado green coloring and shag carpet in your toes. This is your chance here to get your mojo workin' so take it.

After that brief intermission we go back to the bleeding heart of this album with "A Strange Shade of Red." It walks along like a man with no name on his horse coming to wipe out the vermin in paint the town red. I could see a crimson stain on the speakers as this song plays out. "I'm Leavin' this Town" picks up the pace from a horse to a Model A Ford. The driving beat and growlin' harmonica resurrects Al Capone popping open his suicide door and not holding back. While there is more power to this song, you still feel the fight between good and evil here.

The last song whose title is too long for me to write, truly invites Morricone to the saloon. The marching snare sets the gun fighter back drop as guitar and harmonica duel on phrases never spoken, but just read through squinted eyes connecting across a dry arid wasteland. Towards the end the tension lightens up and there is a refreshing celebration in the streets as the Small Blues Trap remains standing.

This is not a traditional blues album by any means. I hope I didn't lead you on. "Time Tricks" is for the risk-takers that like long drives in the middle of the night down lost lonely roads that highways have displaced. Open this album with a bottle of your favorite whiskey, sit back and say bon voyage to reality for a spell. When you can arouse such strong feelings then you have made musical magic. Congrats to SBT!

Kyle M. Palarino



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