

TONEMONKEY

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The City Boys All Stars - Blinded By the Night

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The City Boys Allstars are back with a new album, *Blinded By the Night*, that showcases the band in a live setting, a record of a night in New York where the band reunited for a very rare public performance. I've had a fair amount of time to get to know the record now and can say that it has something a bit special about it.

This band are a little different from the majority of blues bands out there, in a world that forces bands to shrink purely to be economically viable this is a band that has taken the BB King approach with a slick sound and a big horn driven sound. It makes for something that sounds much bigger than most acts and allows them to easily switch between straight blues and more soul or jazz influenced numbers, all united by a massive sound and an undeniably huge groove.

Along with the groove there is something else that marks this album as special. There is a polish to the material that is simply lacking in the vast majority of live recordings. It comes in both the form of performances and arrangements that are as tight as anything you'd expect to hear on a studio recording as well as in the standard of the recording itself. This is an album that has everything laid out in pristine detail. Sometimes that would mean you have a record that is anodyne and antiseptic with feel sacrificed in the name of fidelity, but here it just lets you experience the night exactly as it was with real insight into the way the music was made.

There are, as with the previous City Boys records a couple of real emotional high points. *God Bless the Child* is a roller coaster of feeling, *Testimony* is a funky and powerful introduction to the record and the closer bookends the record well with some real blues in the shape of *City Boy Blues*. There are also real standout performances from individuals, *Blue Lou* is epic throughout as is *Mike Merola*, but it's the varied array of vocalists that set the highest bar throughout the record.

This is a record that's worth investing in, especially in the guise of the double vinyl record. It's funky and emotionally involving, and really highlights the quality of one of the tightest and most skilled bands in the blues. For me I crave a little more dirt, a little more earthiness and a touch less polish, but that's my taste, and it takes nothing away from what is one of the best live recordings of the 21st century.

Source: <http://tonemonkey.tumblr.com/post/89184448706/there-city-boys-all-stars-blinded-by-the-night>