



Reviews



Tracy K is a mainstay on the exceptional Winnipeg Blues scene and she plays a nice harmonica. Some of the material on her second cd is straight out of the Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee school of road balladeering, and some is more contemporary. The real treat is her voice, more in the tradition of Janis Joplin, well controlled, but gritty as a whisky-soaked hobnail. Her band is tight and not inclined to the reckless pursuit of space-filling, so it all works. Most of these cuts are her own, with nicely varied arrangements that recall Delbert McClinton, Bonnie Raitt, Santana and traditional blues. There are some truly swell cuts here; Rollin' with the Changes is heartfelt; and her take on Howlin' Wolf's Spoonful is cool, interspersing the repeating phrases with reggae influenced drumming, some nasty distorted guitar and Tracy K wailing on harp. Plus, her voice is well suited to the material.
- *Jeremy Loomes, the Edmonton Sun, 2007*

The title of Winnipeg-based Tracy K's second outing suggests a grab bag of sorts. But while her grasp may be far-reaching, there's nothing piecemeal about the project – this is a cohesive and carefully considered collection with a distinct musical vision. Tracy is that rarest of creatures, a woman harmonica player (a species that can seemingly be counted on the thumbs of one hand), acquitting herself admirably on the tin sandwich as well as acoustic guitar. It's her vocal prowess, though, that stands out – blessed with a voice that combines sandpapery roughness with extraordinary power, she proves herself an exceptionally expressive singer, able to deliver lines convincingly as well with a soft whisper as a rafter-raising shout. She also composed all but a pair here, and while most of her tunes exhibit fairly obvious influences, she manages to mix things up enough to sound original rather than derivative. There's a Jimmy Reed feel, for example, at the beginning of the disc's opener, "Broken & Blue," but Tracy quickly puts her own stamp on things with impassioned vocals and acoustic harp. "C U Again" is a funky workout with scratchy harmonica and some nice lead guitar that would no doubt fill dance floors. But once we get to Tad Robinson's "Sweet Serenity," here given all the breezy bounce it needs, things just get better and better. Tracy is positively Joplinesque on "Rollin' With The Changes," her passionate delivery utterly spine-tingling. "Stop! Wait A Minute" sounds a bit like the old Dinah Washington/Brook Benton duet, "Baby, You Got What It Takes," but again, Tracy may borrow but doesn't resort to imitation. "Shine" is a roots-rocker with lyrics that display a genuine folk wisdom, and "Lucky Girl" is pure delight, its irresistibly catchy melody supporting sweetly innocent and uncommonly optimistic lyrics. "Here All Along," too, another rootsy rocker, reveals an appealing depth, showing a thoughtful side to Tracy's songwriting. A cover of Willie Dixon's "Spoonful," however, isn't quite as successful; despite some fine harmonica on the signature riff, the simplicity that forms the bedrock of the blues lost in a too-busy arrangement. It's not bad by any means, but as is so often the case, the somewhat over-the-top approach would work better in a live setting. By contrast, "Rock This House," a song that would seem to cry out for a live audience, works very well on disc. The party comes to a close with a feverish climax on "Fire In The Sky," a high-energy romp fuelled by gospel fervor and Tracy's exuberant exhortations. Recommended!
Written by: John Taylor, 2007, Canadian Blues

The first runner up in the Talent Search this year, Thunder Bay's Tracy K returns home leaving us with this delightful CD to remember her by. Co-produced by Jack de Keyzer, herself and her Right Hand Band, her strong vocals, harp & acoustic guitar grace a program of originals plus two covers. The Right Hand Band compliments her perfectly. Her songs are very well written, a seamless blend of blues, country and rock - not a surprise, perhaps, given the Thunder Bay/Winnipeg focus. "C U Again" is a funky workout with a catchy chorus. "Cruisin'", with its Santana-ish lead guitar part, is getting some radio play. "Stop! Wait A Minute" keeps that "C U Again" groove going with some nice harp work and a strong vocal – it's a sharp-eyed vignette from the dance floor. "Here All Along" is

another highlight, with strummed guitars over a driving drum pattern. Tracy K's CD should be at a store near you. If it isn't, you can go to www.tracyk.ca and find out more about Tracy. There are audio samples of her songs there too. May she return soon.

- *John Valenteyn, Maple Blues Magazine, August, 2007*

Tracy K & The Right Hand Band – Old, New, Borrowed & Blues

Finally, some Tracy K fan favorites on CD. Cruisin', CU Again are just the first couple of tunes that any of Tracy's fans can relate to. Producer Jack deKeyzer unquestionably brings out the best in Tracy and her Right Hand Band. Special guests Jamie Steinhoff, Jack deKeyzer and Arden Bruyere add their special touches to this CD creating a great party album!

- *E.B. Bluesday on Tuesday, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CKUW 95.9FM*

Tracy K fans can feel happy because the second album of this Canadian singer, harmonica and guitar player has been published a few months ago. She is backed by her habitual musicians plus some other guest artists and reputed guitar player Jack de Keyzer who has also produced the cd, Tracy walks along different musical styles, from the most contemporary blues to rockin' blues, funky blues, acoustic roots, some folk rock, blues ballads and other interesting surprises you will find on this nice record which gathers the enthusiastic work of a new Canadian star who arises with a vitalistic strength into Canada musical scene. A careful selection of twelve Tracy K own songs and a couple of Willie Dixon and Dave Specter & Ted Robinson covers, all them performed with great passion and self-confidence.

----- *Vicente P. Zumel, La Hora del Blues, Spain, 2007.*