

THE BIG BOY LITTLE BAND - Live From The XM Satellite - review by AJ Wachtel



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THE BIG BOY LITTLE BAND
Live From The XM Satellite
Big Train Records

by A.J. Wachtel

This is a very good CD and also a very interesting one. Very good because The Big Boy Little Band is a groove-oriented blues band: they don't knock you out with their power; first they establish the beat and then they make you listen. And they are very interesting because their blues is more influenced by Memphis than the Chicago or Texas blues we are accustomed to hearing up here in New England. The characteristic I like most about this group is how the harp and the guitar often play the same riffs together in a song and this increases the tightness of the players and takes the groove up another notch. These guys represented the DC Blues Society at last year's International Blues Challenge in Memphis and they made it to the finals. Young gun Matt Kelley also won the Albert King Award for Top Guitarist. All are original tunes by harpist and frontman Bret Littlehailes except for the Leiber and Butler killer "Downhome Girl." Drummer Robby Leebrick and bassist Wolf Crescenze create a tight rhythm section that allows Bret and Matt to have some fun playing off of each other. Things to listen for: Bret's harp playing generally is more like Jerry Portnoy than James Montgomery, although songs like "The Idiot Talking" does have Sonny Boy II influences. He plays a lot of single notes along with the shuffle chords and his bending and arrangements are a little different from what we generally hear up here. This is very attractive to the ear. And the menacing guitar playing is always fresh and nervous; mixing well with the unique sounding vocals. "Beg For The Money," a rock 'n' roller, is sorta like Foghat meets Ike Turner, and I really liked the groove. "The Heat and The Humidity" is a great song with the harp based on Alan Wilson from Canned Heat's "On The Road Again."

Check it out and be impressed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIG BOY LITTLE BAND PLEASE CHECK OUT www.bigboylittleband.com/