



SW Blues CD Review

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Eric Steckel Feels Like Home Independent

With his latest release, *Feels Like Home*, guitarist Eric Steckel is clearly coming into his own as a singer/songwriter/guitarist. The blues will always remain his first love. Not wanting to fall into a trap of regurgitating the same old Pentatonic scales, Steckel seems concentrative on the craft of songwriting. The guitar playing is strong and is used as a second voice to add more color to the canvas.

Eric might be digging into his parent's record collection for an inspirational muse. There's the psychedelic Eastern incense in the acid flavored "Tuscany". The youngster is adept at the Hammond B3 and shows his flair for the organ all over the tracks. There's the Lone Star State influence in the bouncy "Southern Skyline". Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen" becomes an electrified two-step romp. A haunting Dobro of slide turns "Smiling Liar" into a moody piece of drama and a haven for Delta ghosts.

Finding support in bassist Mike Esposito and drummer Duane Trucks gives Eric the freedom to bridge rock, blues and country soul. His friend Craig Thatcher adds second lead guitar on the defiant "Don't Look Behind". Jubilant guitar work lifts the title track "Feels Like Home" into a proclamation of self-attainment.

A few years ago when Eric started out, he was covering a textbook of artists who were his teachers in the music he loved. Now he is branching out from that and taking on a journeyman's role of assimilating classic rock influences and giving them a modern edge.

This CD is a departure but not too radical. Whatever direction he is heading into will be an interesting one. For Steckel, the destination is not as important as the journey itself. He doesn't have to worry about feeling at home. He is already there.

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- Gary Weeks -

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