



Artist: The Planetary Blues Band

Album: Once Upon a Time in the South Loop

Label: Self Released

Reviewer: Melissa Martinez

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You may not be familiar with The Planetary Blues Band, but they're definitely worth checking out. With humble beginnings in mom's basement, brothers Martin Schaefer-Murray (guitar and vocals), Michael Schaefer-Murray (guitar and vocals), and Bobby Schaefer-Murray (bass guitar) along with Nick Evans (drums) began playing the Blues by learning their favorite albums by the Chicago greats. This eventually led to writing original Blues songs with a myriad of influences. With the release of 'Once Upon a Time in the South Loop' they bring their strong Chicago Blues sensibility, with touches of the Delta to fans.

There are ten really strong tracks on this release, and it makes it hard to narrow it down to the ones I enjoy the most. Throughout there are some great guitar solos, like the one in "When I Say I Love You", that I could easily listen to for ages without getting bored. Backed by the solid bass it's a song that allows you to embrace the moment, groove

along, and enjoy. Then there is the Delta feel of “That’s No Way To Get Along”. It has a starkness to the sound that evokes the feeling of Mississippi to me; and the lyrics are classic Blues style. It’s nice to see the newer artists continuing the roots.

A definite toe-tapper is “Sacred and Profane Blues”. From the first note it sucks you in, and when listening to the lyrics it seems like a bit of social commentary. Again, this is what the Blues have been traditionally, but it seems that many artists have lost sight of that. Any song that gets me tapping my foot while thinking about the bigger picture earns an “A” in my book. If you’re looking for that laid back Blues feel check out “Blues Resurrection”. It hits a nice groove early and keeps it going. While the guitars and vocals take center stage, the bass and drums keep this song on track.

For me personally, my favorite track is “The Shillelagh”. While I like all the tracks to varying degrees, I love that this one gives me a few minutes of just good old fashioned Blues instrumental. It feels like a jam session that got recorded somehow, and it takes you out of your worries for a bit while you just dig the smoking guitar riffs. I’ve always admired bands that can speak volumes with just a few instruments.

All in all I would recommend checking these guys out, whether on disc or live. They honor the traditional sounds, while keeping to more modern day themes. Well done guys!



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