



Billy Hamilton & The Lowriders
"Pay Some Money"

AMI Records

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © May 2016

During his forty-five years in the business, Billy Hamilton's been around the block his share of times. As a matter of fact, he's been around the world a bunch of times as well. After releasing his first three albums in the states, in 2006 Billy packed his bags and headed off on a European tour and he didn't return until 2011. Now that's one heck of a road trip. During those five years he wound up touring the European continent twelve times and releasing his fourth album over there as well.

His newest recording, released in March of this year, is titled "Pay Some Money." The disc contains fourteen tracks and other than just two covers, the rest are all originals. It features: Billy Hamilton on vocals and harp (plus rhythm guitar on one track); Jeff Long on piano and Hammond organ; Tommy Long on guitar; Don Hacker and Steve Schmitt on bass; Lynn Long on drums and percussion; William Brian Hogg on sax solos; Emily Sierra on baritone, alto and tenor saxes; and Angela Combs on backing vocals.

The lyrics on the opening and title track are brutally honest and they go something like this: "Well we don't want to play no benefits, we take all the money that we can get. The old bus needs some gasoline, I ain't got no more guitar strings. You got to 'Pay Some Money' to let me play the blues." They continue to describe that a big tip jar is nice and so are beers at half price along with selling merchandise. But the bottom line is that Billy's tired of making do with the same amount of money he made in 1972, so pay him some damn money and let him play the blues. Amen! Musically, it's a swingin' shuffle that features hard driving rhythm, smokin' sax and piano leads and very well done lead and harmony vocals. This is what's called making an impressive first impression.

Seeing a fine ass thing in a tiny skirt with a silly boy in a white T-Shirt has Billy wondering what ever happened to the "Fancy Man?" As a matter of fact, heed his advice: "When that boy comes to get you for the high school dance, you better peak out the window and sneak a glance. Pants falling down and shoes untied, you tap on the glass and wave goodbye". Another cleverly written track with Billy and Angela nailing the lead and back up vocals and the band laying down a funky dance beat led by the rhythm and percussion from Don and Lynn.

As the Diamonds said back in 1958.....

"Come let's stroll, stroll across the floor.

Come let's stro-oh-oh-oll, stroll across the floor".

Now that's not how this one goes lyrically but from the opening notes I was wanting to stro-oh-oh-oll, stroll across my floor. This fifties sounding flashback is actually called "Don't Waste Your Time" and I didn't waste any of my time when it came to hitting replay oh-oh-over and oh-oh-over again. Amazingly, Don, Lynn and Jeff aren't doing anything fancy on the piano, bass and drums and yet they make "not doing anything fancy" sound so masterful. Once again - and at the risk of sounding redundant - Billy and Angela are magical together on the vocals. Side note to Billy - keep her around for the next CD...PLEASE!

They can put you in a school house, a university or a big academy; but you don't know nothing until you pay some dues; You ain't "Never Gonna Learn (Until You Lose)." Yet, more good advice from Billy. Until now, I haven't heard much harp blowin' but I'm liking what I'm hearing on this one. What? What did you say? I didn't say anything about the vocals? Yes, they're nailing them.

"Bad Man's Babies" is the disc's most traditional, slow blues number. With that said, in addition to Billy belting out the blues on the vocals and the harp, Tommy's kicking ass on some scorching blues guitar licks.

Since he's here singing about it, I'm guessing that the woman Billy's singing about on "Bar Room Gasoline" isn't or wasn't his woman. Either that or he's a real light sleeper. You see, it's a song about a woman who gets a bit ornerey.... errrr make that a bit murderous.... once she has a drink or two. With this smoker being about a raucous woman in a rowdy environment, the bands in the right frame of mind creating a ruckus of their own.

Other tracks on "Pay Some Money" include: "One More Day In Prison Blues", "It Hurts", "Fever", "Big Mama's House Band", "Donna Rae", "Something Is Wrong", "Use Me" and "No Shame in My Game".

This is the part of the review where I give you the bands website - www.thelowridersband.com - and suggest you head there to find out more about the band, get your hands on some of their music and ask you to tell Billy that the Blewzzman sent you. With that said, I'm heading there right now myself. Since this was my first Billy Hamilton & The Lowriders CD, I want their others as well.

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