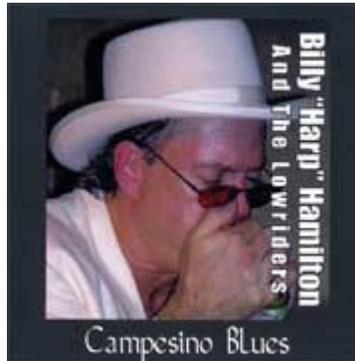


Reviews from Blues Art Studio Journal/Vienna/June 2006



BILLY 'HARP' HAMILTON and The Lowriders

Billy 'Harp' Hamilton & The Lowriders

(CD – no issue number)

Billy 'Harp' Hamilton & The Lowriders Live!

(CD - no issue number)

Campesino Blues

(CD – no issue number)

www.thelowridersband.com

Now these guys are good! Based in the Cincinnati/ Dayton, Ohio area, leader Bill Coleman (or Hamilton if you prefer – they are the same person) has a fine voice and plays sharp, tight harmonica, his breaks concentrating on content rather than flash, and he writes some excellent material with pointed and/ or humorous lyrics – try 'Latex Love' from 'Campesino Blues' for a good example – and the originals are in the majority on these three releases, though there are also some intriguing borrowings. His band too is sympathetic and cool, providing a subtle but often driving backdrop (based around Mike McGuire's Hammond B-3 or piano a lot of the time), and their work tends to avoid the obvious; the version of Chuck Berry's 'Nadine' off their first eponymous release is a good example, slower than Chuck's and with a slyly sophisticated groove – a real surprise!

Those who remember War's big hit 'Low Rider' (covered in the first CD) will find it no surprise that these guys can also get funky. Their influences, on the evidence of these three CDs, seem to range from vintage Buddy Guy, Ray Charles and Chuck Berry through Professor Longhair and the boundary leaping organ grooves of the likes of Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff and Brother Jack MacDuff on to the likes of the funky R&B of Lee Dorsey and Robert Parker, the Stax sound and as previously stated, seventies funk. The originals tend to fit into these categories too.

The live set was recorded in June 2005 at the Oxford Music Festival in Ohio and gives presumably a fine example of how they sound on stage – not too different! They never stray into self-indulgent rock territory, preferring instead to maintain the groove, and solos are still kept short and sharp. Particularly worth noting, as it is such a rarity these days, is the excellent straight-ahead, no frills guitar playing.

The Campesino' CD contains many tight, focused, self-written blues (and one Country and Western number as closer) and is again an excellent, relaxed set. These guys may be 'only' a local bar band but I wish they would play my local. They can show a lot of so-called blues bands just how it should be done. ... **Norman Darwen**

BILLY HARP HAMILTON & THE LOWRIDERS
2007 European tour dates

16.03 Puławy, Dom Chemika
17.03 Domecko k. Opola, Stary Dom
18.03 Zdzeszowice
21.03 Kościan, KoK
22.03 Warszawa, Radio dla Ciebie, Live
23.03 Poznań, Blue Note
24.03 Ostrów Wielkopolski (warsztaty, koncert)
25.03 Racibórz, Strzecha
26.03 Warszawa, Tygmont
2.05 Braniewo,
3.05 Ełk,
4.05 Druskiennikai (LT),
5.05 Iława,
6.06 Gdynia,
7.05 Warszawa
20.06 Ciechanów
05.07 Suwałki
06.07 Varniai, (LT), Bliuzo Naktys Festival,
07.07 Klaipeda, (LT), Kurpiai Jazz Club
08.07 Palanga, (LT)
14.07 Jelenia Góra
15.07 Brzeg
15.08 Puławy, warsztaty bluesowe
16.08 Puławy, warsztaty bluesowe
19.08 Warszawa, Lapidarium
23.08 Bydgoszcz, Harmonica Bridge Festival
24.08 Toruń, Harmonica Bridge Festival

(LT-Lithuania; all other shows in Poland)