



As he sings on his latest release for Kijam Records, “Ten Shades Of Blue,” Joe Pitts is indeed “No Stranger To The Blues.” He was born in Arkansas, and developed not only a love of the Delta blues but also the British Invasion rockers who introduced the blues to many a young, aspiring guitarist. Joe also spent the summer of 1994 honing his considerable guitar chops at the Berklee School of Music, and has released six prior solo CD’s as well as making a name for himself as a first-call session man.

On “Ten Shades Of Blue,” Joe covers ten nuggets that give him a chance to show off not only his guitar prowess, but his deeply-soulful vocals. Under Joe’s skillful fingers, these songs become his own, and are not just a “blues history lesson.” One can almost feel the “sting” of that “nother mule kickin’ in your stall” thru Joe’s deft lead licks on “Breaking Up Somebody’s Home.” If you listen really close, you can hear “the hell-hounds howling’ on the slow-burning journey into the depths of despair, “Freedom From My Demons.” Joe fires off some great slow-blues licks on this one, and again on the Walter Trout, minor-key tale of the troubled times we live in, “Clouds On The Horizon.”

Joe closes the set with a tribute to his British heroes. His guitar is augmented by some hot keyboard work from Robert Coleman and Terry Bradley on slide on the rollicking, stop-time John Mayall tune, “Walkin’ On Sunset.” And, Joe breaks out the acoustic dobro to tell Peter Green’s tale of “needing that woman like the sky needs the sun,” “The World Keeps On Turning.’

We have two favorites, too. Joe takes off in Elmore James mode with the fast pace of “I’m Worried,’ complete with old-school echo-effect vocals. And Gary Getts keeps that harp riff rolling along that drives Muddy’s “Cross-eyed Cat,” over a rumba-fied backbeat.

Joe Pitts uses his guitar almost as an extension of his soul, and, coupled with his spot-on vocals, “Ten Shades Of Blue” is indeed a riveting listening experience!!

Until next time....Sheryl and Don Crow