

Mighty Mike Schermer Band

Next Set

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It seems the San Francisco Bay Area today is a hotbed of dynamite Soul and R&B artists. Many of the sidemen of yesterday are stepping to the fore to give the world a taste of their own vision. Last year there was the Jackie Payne & Steve Edmonson Band release ***Partner In The Blues***, and that release just blew me away, then Tommy Castro's bassist, Randy McDonald's recent effort and now there's this album. This Santa Cruz denizen, 'Mighty' Mike Schermer, attracts feelings of gratuitous payback that results in him drawing the assistance of a virtual who's, who of the Bay Area recording scene as helpers on this his second solo release.

This help in fact, speaks volumes about the esteem with which he's held by the fellow musicians with whom he's played. His core band includes such Bay Area standouts as Austin DeLone and Dale Ockerman on keyboards, June Core on drums and Steve Ehrman on bass, while all-world Terry Hanck provides tasty sax. Guests that lend a helping hand on this recording include Maria Muldaur, Angela Strehli, Sista' Monica and Shana Morrison.

In fact in my mind one single cut '*My Big Sister's Radio*' has to be worth the price of this CD alone. Anyone who grew up listening to an older sibling's music will relate. Then there's the blues torch ballad '*Real Fine Love*'. Then he gives us the homey New Orleans feel of '*Mama Say*' or the gut bucket blues of the closer '*Setting Sun*'.

Where all this may not be new stuff, it's calculated to get you up and boogeying, rubbing tummy's on the dance floor and to this end it surely succeeds. In all, Mighty Mike either wrote or co-wrote eleven of the twelve cuts presented here. His chief collaborators are bandmates Steve Ehrmann and Austin DeLone. The odd song out is a menacing version of Earl King's '*It All Went Down The Drain*', it contains an ominous guitar line reinforced by a fat sax.

This is a can't miss dance album and a tribute to all music Americana, and it comes from the new capitol of roots music, the San Francisco Bay Area, where the ghost of Otis Redding seems to have settled.

by Brian Augustine