

Blues Connections

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James Armstrong was born into a world of music having a father who played jazz guitar and a mother who sang the blues. Having picked up the guitar early in life, he started touring in his late teens and was fortunate enough to work with the likes of Albert Collins, Big Joe Turner, Keb Mo and Sam "Bluzman" Taylor to name but a few! His promising 1995 debut album Sleeping With A Stranger drew comparisons to Robert Cray before a life threatening stabbing incident briefly curtailed his career a couple of years later. A born survivor and undeterred, he made his second album Dark Night whilst recovering in 1998, bringing in Michael Ross to help out on lead guitar with Joe Louis Walker & Doug Macleod also making guest appearances. After recording the critically acclaimed Got It Goin' On in 2000, he received WC Handy Award nominations the following year for his song 'Pennies & Picks' as well as 'Best Contemporary Male Blues Guitarist'.

Blues At The Border marks a welcome return to the recording studio for James Armstrong, who releases his first new album in eleven years this month on CatFood Records. A tribute to former mentor Sam "Bluzman" Taylor 'Everything That's Good To Ya' (Ain't Always Good For Ya) gets us straight in the groove, followed by the soulful 'Somebody Got To Pay' & 'Baby Can You Hear Me', both co-produced & written by bassist Bob Trenchard. The title track 'Blues At The Border' inspired by frustrating post 9/11 border controls, unleashes some sensational slide guitar that gets even more low down and dirty on 'Devil's Candy'. 'Nothing Left To Say' glides into soul blues before the funky 'High Maintenance Woman' & 'Good Man, Bad Thing' raise the tempo! James Armstrong always lends a certain 'authenticity' to proceedings and his autobiographical 'Young Man With The Blues' surely has to be the best original blues song written this year... an absolute gem! 'Brand New Man' takes the band into improvised jazz territory ahead of a soul shuffle cruise on 'Long Black Car' that closes the set.

Blues At The Border successfully blends traditional & contemporary blues with James Armstrong delivering superb guitar licks and soulful vocals that will resonate for a long time to come!