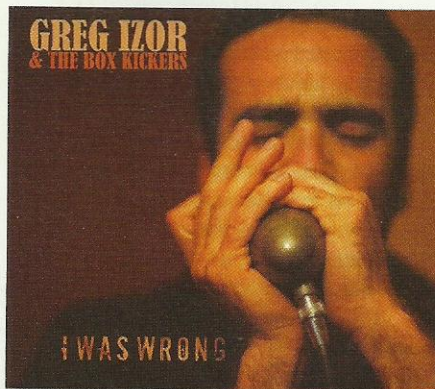


Blaine's sound is rooted in a feisty, smash-mouth groove. For a prime example check out the disc's opener, *Not The Forgiving Kind*, where Blaine's guitar leads ricochet through the rhythm with piercing, funk-fueled phrasing. Similarly powerful is *Affection And Pain*, Blaine equaling the muscle of his guitar with his sandpaper-toned voice. Blaine turns up the heat in the deep, minor-key *Can't Help But Wonder*, his brittle yet astringent guitar tone shrieking in anguish, the notes flying like so many tears from a jilted lover's eyes. Blaine also proves he can hang on the back porch with material like *Gone, Not Forgotten*, a rural-flavored acoustic instrumental with airy, melodically voiced slide guitar, and an alternate acoustic rendition of an electric album cut called *Must Be Nice*, a dropped-D-tuned track filled with a deep southern ache.

With his tenacious grooves, commanding guitar presence, and soulful personality, Rob Blaine leaves a mark on the contemporary blues scene. This is also an artist who is just finding his good stuff—watch out.

—MARK URICHECK



his new post blowing harp with Texas guitar slinger Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets, you might not be convinced he's leaving Austin anytime soon. Backed by a top-notch band of mostly Austin-area musicians, including guitarists Mike Keller (Marcia Ball, Fabulous Thunderbirds) and Willie Pipkin, bassist Johnny Bradley, and East Coast drummer Jason Corbiere, the Box Kickers follow Izor's lead with great intuition, creating a powerful engine that drives his harp work. With vocals reminiscent of Kim Wilson and a tone that's just as monstrous, Izor impresses on the

tough shuffles *Young Girl* and *Who You Lying To* and evokes George "Harmonica" Smith on the swinging *I'm Yours*. Three original instrumentals, *Turkey Necks*, *Swiss Krissy*, and the jazzy *Voleur*, showcase Izor's ability to wield both diatonic and chromatic harmonicas with great originality, power, and finesse.

Izor proves to be that all-too-rare total package—a creative vocalist, harp player, songwriter, and showman—on this highly recommended debut effort.

—ROGER GATCHET

GREG IZOR

I Was Wrong

ShortStack – 1008

The list of serious blues harmonica players who have distinguished themselves as disciples of the postwar greats is an all-too short one, at least in comparison to the large number of aspiring guitarists out there. And although he may not be a household name yet, Greg Izor of Austin, Texas, deserves a place on that short list of harp player/singers who have developed a truly unique voice on the instrument without sounding like watered-down versions of Little Walter, James Cotton, and Big Walter Horton.

Originally from Vermont, Izor cut his teeth playing with Burlington bands like Left Eye Jump and continued to hone his craft after moving to New Orleans, where he came under the tutelage of Jumpin' Johnny Sansone. Izor hustled all-night gigs along Bourbon Street and other Crescent City clubs for six years, eventually working his way up to the prestigious New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival before the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina led him to relocate to Austin. On the menacing single-chord groove *Stuck In Texas*, Izor blows venomous solos and reminds us that he's going "home to Louisiana, if I have to steal every mile."

Based on the quality of this record and

ADAM GUSSOW

Kick And Stomp

Modern Blues Harmonica – (No #)

Adam Gussow is best known to many as one half of Satan & Adam, his longtime partnership with one-man band Sterling "Mr. Satan" Magee. The two have been playing together since the mid-1980s, when they met up in Harlem a decade or so before Gussow started graduate studies at Princeton. Those fruitful

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