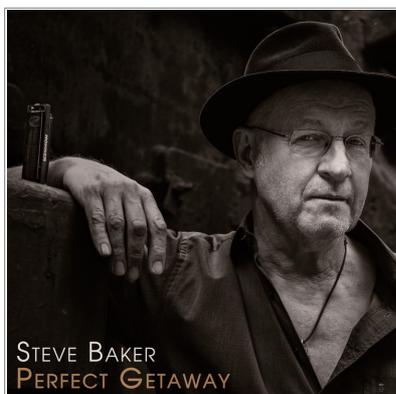


Steve Baker Perfect Getaway

Styl: Independent | Cat.-No.: TZ1473 | Label: Timezone | Distributor: Timezone Distribution



Track Listing:

1. Anyway You Do
2. Blind Man Blues
3. Brand New Day
4. Notional Security Blues
5. Born In London
6. (Don't Wanna Be An) Apeman
7. Doublecrossed & Blue
8. Hustle On Down
9. Glad I Got You
10. Nobody's Fool
11. Soul Train
12. Do Me
13. Perfect Getaway
14. One Word

From sideman to main actor

Steve Baker's first solo album represents a major departure from his previous releases, where his virtuoso harmonica generally accompanied other singers. On "Perfect Getaway" he successfully reinvents himself as a vocalist and songwriter and delivers a captivating collection of self-penned songs, which also happen to feature some great harmonica. Originally from London, but a long time German resident, Baker is well known for his pioneering work on the European harmonica scene as a musician, author, teacher and consultant to the Hohner company. He enjoys an international reputation as an innovative player and stylistically versatile accompanist, performing with a wide range of artists including Tony Sheridan, Chris Jones or European blues legend Abi Wallenstein, as well as on countless studio sessions. Here he shows himself from a totally different side as singer, bandleader, arranger and producer.

Not surprisingly, considering his eclectic musical background, this is by no means a pure blues record and reflects the broad range of influences which he has absorbed over the years.



Of the 14 compositions on “Perfect Getaway”, a couple have previously been released in other line-ups, but this is the first time Steve has recorded his own versions with a full band. Many of the songs are recent and several were written specifically for this CD. Following intensive pre-production with bassist Gaz, the album was recorded in only 6 days by Marcus Praed at the Mühle der Freundschaft (Mill of Friendship) studio in Bad Iburg, where Baker enlisted the assistance of several top players from the Osnabrück music scene. With Kai Strauss (guitar), Alex Lex (drums), Gaz (bass) and Chris Rannenber (piano), all songs (including most of Steve’s lead vocals and harp) were recorded live in the beautiful ambience of the 300 year old mill. Mo Fuhrhop plays sparse Hammond organ on three titles and the album also features Steve’s daughter Gina (her recording debut) and Gaz’ group Opportunity on backing vocals.

The tunes are extremely varied and draw on a wide range of styles, from singer/songwriter, country, gospel, blues and rock&roll to crunching rock. What they all have in common is Baker’s old school pop sensibility, which gives his compositions high recognition value and makes them eminently suitable for airplay. With catchy refrains and memorable hooks, they’re as melodic as his harp playing while also somehow sounding unmistakably English.

The opener “Anyway You Do” is a case in point, beginning with melancholy acoustic country sounds before going through some unexpected changes to end as uptempo Afrobeat. “Blind Man Blues” is reminiscent of Dr John or Little Feat and is followed by the acoustic funk of “Brand New Day”, with soulful backing vocals and a classic Baker harp solo at the end. “Notional Security Blues” takes a tongue in cheek look at of online snooping, while the autobiographical “Born In London” sounds like vintage Chuck Berry. This is followed by the ripping punk-pop of “(Don’t Wanna Be An) Apeman”, with guitar riffs which are evocative of both the Kinks and the Searchers. The tension-filled “Doublecrossed & Blue”, one of Steve’s most popular instrumental numbers, is followed by a relaxed rocking remake of the old Have Mercy song “Hustle On Down” in the style of Elvis Presley’s Memphis album or J.J.Cale. “Glad I Got You” comes across like a mix of Motown, Stones and British pub-rock, with backing vocals from Gaz and Gina. “Nobody’s Fool” mixes country with New Orleans piano, while “Soul Train” is uptempo rockabilly with 3 part backing vocals, virtuoso guitar licks and a great sax-influenced harp solo. “Do Me” is a psychodrama with heavy guitar riffs and dark vocals, which lead into classic Britrock refrains before segueing into the anthemic title track “Perfect Getaway”. The closing number, the poignant country gospel “One Word”, brings all of the elements back together again with Steve’s trademark lyrical harp playing, a beautiful vocal arrangement and a final inspired guitar solo from Kai.

After a lengthy career as a highly regarded instrumentalist and sideman, “Perfect Getaway” is convincing proof that Steve Baker has plenty more to offer as a rocking singer and songwriter.

