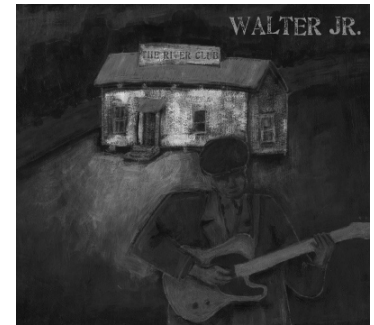


blues in britain MAGAZINE



WALTER JR. - The River Club

Gatortone GT2008 – With languid rhythms as slippery as an eel and an accent sometimes as thick as swamp mud, Lafayette, Louisiana native, singer and guitarist Walter Jr. has a rather fine release here. This is his fifth album for the label, but I have never come across him before and I realize this is my loss. He is certainly a distinctive individual, both as a singer and as a guitarist. Take a listen to just about any track, though he can occasionally come across as a swampy B.B. King. He can reference New Orleans second-line rhythms and the funk of The Meters on the title track, follow it up with a John Lee Hooker styled electric boogie, and throw in some jazzy licks behind his Louisiana Lyrics on “Down The Bayou.” He can be as spooky as vintage Doctor John Thhe Nite Tripper, or do his roadhouse blues thing on “Something Something.” And then he’s a Louisiana Elvis on the wonderfully rocking “Sweet Potato Pie.” It’s probably no coincidence that he uses Sonny Landreth’s rhythm section of Dave Ranson on bass and Michael Burch on drums, and Sonny himself guests on the closing “He Holds The Lightning.” On this number inspired inspired by Psalm 37 of the Bible – as is its massively rocking, take-no-prisoners (musically and lyrically) predecessor, “Jesus Say”, Landreth’s contribution is instantly recognizable and atmospheric.

If you are looking for a set of familiar-sounding straight 12 bar numbers, then pass this by. If you are searching for something rather more individual, rootsy, and committed, then do check out Walter Jr. I’ll certainly be making the effort to hear more by him. (www.walterjr.com)

Rating: 9 – *Norman Darwen*