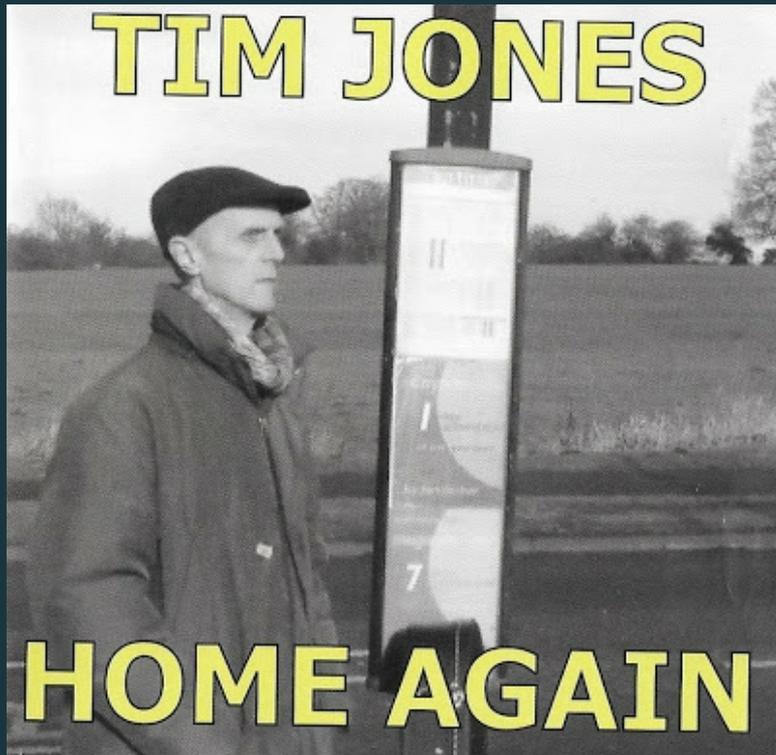


Review: Tim Jones - Home Again

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Tim Jones - Home Again (Independent: BN001)

Back from Spain with a host of new songs, Tim Jones wasted no time in assembling a recording band to lay the tracks down and do them justice. In drummer Sam Kelly and bassman Andy Hodge he found a tight unit who add punch with subtlety to underpin the main man's expressive guitar work and warm vocals.

Bo Diddley, no less, once said Jones "plays like BB King" but namesake Freddie was apparently his big hero and you can certainly sense this here.

The songs are mainly inspired by Jones' time in Cordoba, the "Small Town" of the album's opener. "Watching You" is heartwrenching stuff, Jones unable to reach out to an unknown Facebook 'friend' on the other side of the world whose life seems to be falling apart with a love affair gone wrong. Kelly and Hodge move it all along with understated drive.

The slow blues "The Nature Of Love" is also full of heartfelt emotion, this time with fluid and melodic guitar interspersed with a vocal performance that has the yearning delivery and phrasing that recalls no less than Bob Marley. "I Want Your Money" ups the pace with biting, expressive guitar while the inventive "Fingers Under The Door" gives Jones the chance to spotlight himself with a deft acoustic guitar signature underlaying more well-phrased vocal and a short, stabbing electric solo.

"The Night We Met" funks things up a little, a rolling, minor-key foot-tapper with chunky lead playing and more wonderfully economical playing from the back-up boys. The slow and brooding "We're All Gonna Die Sometime" boasts excellent, suitably tortured guitar and desperate vocal while the finale "After The Rain" has a rock-fuelled riff and chewy lead playing, while still always nicely underdone in a joint production job by Jones and Steve Rispin. But there are also two accomplished covers, "Rollin' And Tumblin'" via Big Joe Williams and Canned Heat, plus an awesome, blistering "St James Infirmary" inspired, apparently, by jazz trombone king Jack Teagarden. Thankfully, this led me to discover what I humbly suggest could be a definitive version of this much-covered blues, Teagarden and band live at the The Roundtable, New York, in 1959. Check it out – and check out Tim Jones too.

JOHN BOTTOMLEY