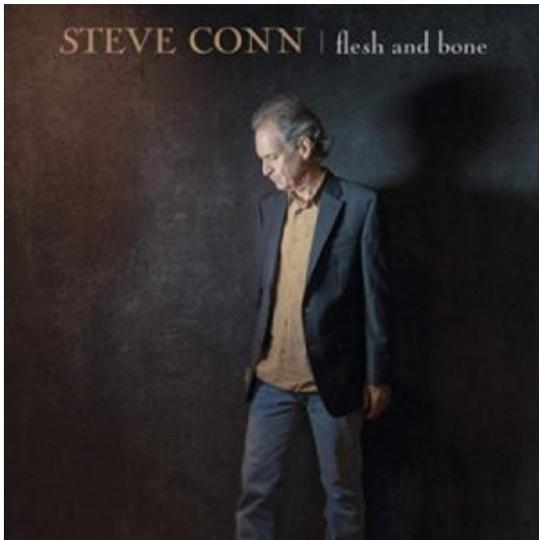


BLUESBLAST

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Steve Conn – *flesh and bone*

www.steveconn.com

not really records

12 songs time – 50:20

The tired old saying “Who knew?” is entirely apropos in this case. Full disclosure I knew some but not all this. The talent, creativity, musicianship and wonderfully crazy good lyrics displayed by Steve Conn are a lot to take in. Recently he came to my attention as the keyboard-accordion player on Sonny Landreth’s *Recorded Live In Lafayette* and his closing vocal there on his clever “The One And Only Truth” with the key line being, “My momma told me the one and only truth, yeah my momma told me the one and only truth. Spend your money and don’t look back, cause you never see a hearse with a luggage rack.” That combination of sage advice, humor, tongue-in-cheek-ness and gee-whiz-ness spills over into this recording in spades. The man has the perfect emotive singer-songwriter voice.

Steve sweeps you away on a whirlwind of emotions and varying musicality’s touching various parts of your soul and heart strings. Keep your dancing shoes and Kleenex handy as he brings the humanity out of you. You’ll laugh, you’ll cry and sometimes simultaneously.

It’s no wonder that he has performed with artists as diverse as Albert King, Sonny Landreth, Shelby Lynne and Levon Helm among others. The musicians assembled here complement his various musical adventures with just the right touch at all times.

(Just a side note: I didn't capitalize the song titles so as to stay true to the way they are presented on the jacket.)

On "famous" he muses that he'll be famous when he's dead to a New Orleans second line shuffle with Sonny Landreth's inimitable slide guitar in tow along with Steve's Professor Longhair piano stylings. After fantasizing about his posthumous fame he closes with "I gotta run, I guess you heard there's a clean up on aisle two." "flesh and bone" is a jazzy song about one's body being a vehicle for your soul. The jazz piano and guitar make thoughts of the journey easier to cope with.

Steve speaks to the quest of most trying to do the right things in life in "doing the best I can." Electric piano, organ and Joe V. McMahan's guitar weave lovely melodies. "I know I'm not perfect or anything close, but I'm all I've got." The rigors of living a downtrodden life against a lazy string-infused groove.

Ok boys and girls here comes the time to visit the Kleenex concession. "annalee" drips with real sentimentality. "forever seventeen" paints a lovely picture of past times. "We've both gotten old now, that's what happens, to me she'll be forever seventeen." A Professor Longhair piano shuffle meets sentimental family history on "good times are coming." A song about the last goodbye, "sing me to the other side" with absolutely gorgeous piano accompaniment. Forget it, I'm into my second box of tissues.

Sonny Landreth's slide spars with Steve's accordion on another New Orleans shuffle as the narrator rattles off a litany of life concerns and situations in "around and around." "What's the truth, nobody knows." The listener is sent off with the most cinematic and thought-provoking song in "Without A Trace," a mysterious lament about an apparent suicide. "Was it cruel or was it kind to leave a shred of hope behind?"

I'm not exaggerating when I say this is a rare shining gem of a recording. Combine a super-talented keyboard player with the heart and soul of a poet and this is the masterpiece you get. One minute you are tapping your toe to a pulsating rhythm and the next you are moved to your very core. I could go on and on, but I think I'd rather just spin this again and stir my emotions.

Reviewer Greg "Bluesdog" Szalony hails from the New Jersey Delta.