

Blues Bytes

September 2008

Jo' Buddy & Down Home King III are a duo from Finland, who specialize in a unique musical blend of blues, ragtime, zydeco, ska, country, rockabilly, garage rock, and soul. Their music is hypnotic and raw, but has a laidback quality to it, with a touch of New Orleans mixed in. Jo' Buddy is actually singer/guitarist/songwriter Jussi Raulamo, who's 25+ years of performing has included over 2000 shows in Europe and Northern America and has opened for or played with just about anybody who's anybody in the blues world. Down Home King III is his 20-something partner, who provides drums and percussion.

Listening to the duo's second release, *Whole Lotta Things To Do* (Ram-Bam Records) is probably the best way to understand what makes them tick. Believe it or not, they manage to squeeze elements of all the above listed styles into most of these songs. Jo' Buddy has a nice soulful voice and is a first-rate guitarist. He plays guitar through an old tube radio amp, which gives his guitar an outer-spacey sound on some tracks. Down Home King III's percussion work is right on time and provides a great backdrop to these tracks.

Highlights include "Howlin' These Blues," "Have Yourself A Ball," which owes more than a passing nod to Jimmy Reed, "They Don't Know What I Do," Mississippi Delta blues via Scandinavia, and "Thank You Mr. Lockwood Jr.," a shuffle in tribute to Robert Jr. Lockwood.

As stated above, this music is raw and hypnotic and probably different from most blues you've heard before. Combining all of this into one cohesive unit could have been a disaster in the wrong hands, but fortunately, the duo is able to pull it off effectively, making *Whole Lotta Things To Do* a successful endeavor.

--- *Graham Clarke*