

to the flavor of the easy walking instrumental shuffle of "It's So Easy," where Campbell's snapping guitar playing is also complemented by the organ of Mart Sammon, Buddy Guy's keyboard player.

Campbell turns Howlin' Wolf's "My Last Affair" into a compelling blues ballad with his genially pleading singing, followed by the rocking rendition of "I'm Just Your Fool," with horns and harp supporting his terrific rendition of the Buddy Johnson composition "I'm Just Your Fool," which is modeled after Little Walter's recording.

He evokes Link Wray and the Ventures before getting into another shuffle groove for his rendition of "Summertime," adding some jazzy fills, before closing the album with "Bluesman;" backed just by his guitar, Eddie sings about being a real bluesman, and having played with everyone from A and Z.

But as he sings, you can still hear them in his blues played so direct and honest which is why this recording is so appealing.

Ron Weinstock

RESONANCE BIG BAND **Plays Tribute To Oscar Peterson** **RESONANCE RECORDS**

Performing an 11-tune set of mostly Oscar Peterson originals, Romanian-born Marian Petrescu excels at the piano chair, backed by a rousing big band of Los Angeles musicians and a string quartet.

Petrescu has an elegant keyboard presence as he performs ballads and swingers with the band led by arranger/conductor Bill Cunliffe (other arrangements by Kuno Schmid and Claus Ogerman) and the string quartet.

The set launches with Peterson's "Waltzing Is Hip," a cleverly upbeat waltz for the big band and is followed by another Peterson original, "L'Impossible," a delicate Latin number for the big band. Tunes by Rodgers-Hart ("Little Girl Blue"), Lalo Shifrin ("Down Here On the Ground"), Henry Mancini ("Sally's Tomato"), Oscar Pettiford ("Tricotism") and Leonard Bernstein ("West Side Story Medley"), and other tracks give Petrescu opportunities to prove his proficient piano style. "Little Girl Blue," performed with the string quartet, is especially notable, featuring Petrescu's romantic, light two-handed approach.

Petrescu (b. 1970) began piano lessons at a young age. Inspired by an Oscar Peterson television performance, Petrescu pursued classical and jazz studies in Sweden and Finland, where he now lives. By age 15, he debuted at the Pori Jazz Festival. Petrescu is also inspired by pianists such as Art Tatum, Kenny Barron, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Michel Petrucciani and others. He's performed throughout Europe as a soloist and with an array of prominent jazz artists and has been hailed by Marial Solal as "the Horowitz of jazz piano."

Petrescu shows plenty of promise. His marvelous performances, the well-chosen selections, superb arrangements and the support and solos from fine studio musicians (especially timekeeper Joe La Barbera) make this a very listenable CD. Included in the set is a bonus DVD on "The Making of Resonance Big Band Plays Tribute to Oscar Peterson."

Nancy Ann Lee

J.C. SMITH BAND

Defining Cool
COZMIK RECORDS

Hailing from the San Francisco Bay area, the J.C. Smith Band is a versatile six piece outfit (J.C. Smith on guitar and vocals, Donnie Green on drums, Paul Smith on B3 and keys, Robert Green on bass, Tommy Maitland on trumpet and Abraham Vasquez on tenor, alto and baritone sax) that can handle everything from straight guitar driven blues, *Bluezeman*, to saxophone and B3 fueled funk, *Rite on Time*, to jump/swing on the Roy Brown classic *She Walks Right In*, to mid-tempo scorchers care of Duke Robillard, *Lonesome Blues/Duke's Blues* and Louis Jordan, *Outskirts of Town*, to groove heavy reworks of the oft covered Don Nix tune *Going Down*, to a guitar and piano driven version of Albert King's *I Walked All Night Long* to a slide laden version of Muddy Water's *Satisfied*.

What holds this wide ranging set together is Smith's powerfully elastic voice that swoops and glides with ease through not only the low down gritty numbers but also the ones that push the high end of his vocal chords. While this set is heavy on covers there are a couple of well done originals and the band adds enough new instrumental spark to the rest to make it an enjoyable listen.

Mark Smith

ROD PIAZZA & THE MIGHTY FLYERS **BLUES QUARTET**

Soul Monster
DELTA GROOVE

Kicking things off with the greasy, funky, instrumental title track that sounds like Booker T & the MGs but with harmonica instead of B3 leading the charge, Rod Piazza and crew seem poised to take their sound on an exciting trip outside the confines of the West Coast blues that have been their stock in trade.

That changes all too quickly on the next three tracks featuring a throw away original, *Cheap Wine*, and covers of Jimmy Reed's *Can't Stand to See You Go* and Big Bill Broonzy's *Key to the Highway* that have more mileage on them Willie Nelson's tour bus. Even though the change in direction doesn't really materialize, the balance of the disc is a better representation of the band's talent.

Piazza's smoking read on mentor George Smith's *Sunbird*, is a first class harmonica showcase and also features the hard charging piano work of Miss Honey. The Jimmy Liggins little big band number, *That's What's Knocking Me Out*, likewise features Rod and Honey's undeniable instrumental prowess and bandstand chemistry and will likely be filing dance floors every time the band pulls it out on stage. *Tell Me About it Sam* is an homage to the late, great Sam Myers and the night he busted Piazza for not knowing the words to his own song.

Mixing things up, the distorted vocals on *Queen Bee* add an interesting counterpoint to Rod's crisp runs up and down the harmonica and guitarist Henry Carvajal's earnest vocals and the easy, loping beat send *Talk to Me* straight back to the 50s. The disc even features saxophonist Jonny Viau on a couple of cuts which is virtually unheard of on a harmonica driven disc. He acquits himself well though and Piazza seems to revel in the freedom