



Salgado, Curtis

Clean Getaway

Rhythm Safari/Priority Records

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Don't Call It A Comeback

Curtis Salgado burst out of the Pacific Northwest thirty years ago as lead singer for the **Robert Cray Band**, then briefly fronted **Roomful of Blues** before embarking on an impressive solo career. *Clean Getaway*, his first release since he survived life-threatening hepatic disease and received a liver transplant, cements his reputation as one of the best blue-eyed Soul singers on the planet.

Salgado's forte is live performance; seeing him and hearing the almost otherworldly power and passion of his voice is a transcendent experience. This album, while made in the studio, nonetheless succeeds in capturing that power and passion. Most of the songs lack memorable hooks, with a few exceptions, but all are redeemed by Salgado's commitment and chops. Throughout he is ably abetted by the stellar musicians of the **Phantom Blues Band**, **Taj Mahal's** frequent collaborators, as well as guest New Orleans keyboard ace **Jon Cleary** and other top players.

There isn't much twelve-bar Blues here as Soul and R&B reign. The album leads off with the title cut, a Funk tune featuring Salgado's skill at growling and crooning. Cleary's Louisiana piano riffs highlight the up-tempo "Both Sorry Over Nothin'" and then Salgado really hits his stride with "Who's Lovin' You?" a highly emotional song spotlighting the lead guitar of **Jeff Golub**. Subsequent renderings alternate between mid-tempo and up-tempo, with the stylish accompaniment on several of Salgado's overdubbed vocals and the contributions of uncredited backup singers.

The album shifts into high gear with "I Don't Want to Discuss It," an irresistibly danceable tune driven by the propulsive rhythm section of organist **Mike Finnigan** and drummer **Tony Braunagel**. "20 Years of B.B. King," a lament for rejected love, is my favorite song of the disc, featuring the **B.B. King**-inspired guitar licks of **Johnny Lee Schell**. The high quality is maintained through the next few songs and the album ends with the barrelhouse up-tempo closer "Bottle of Red Wine," wherein Salgado displays his harmonica as well as vocal prowess.

Rock 'n' Roll is not the only child of the Blues. Among its other children are Soul and R&B. If you like those genres, and if you appreciate fine singing, this album is for you.

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