

PENGUIN
EGGS
Autumn
2003

Recordings

Chris Flory

Blues In My Heart
Stony Plain
SPCD 1288

Chris Flory may have blues in his heart but jazz pulses deep through his veins. This highly satisfying Charlie Christian/Wes Montgomery-schooled trip ably demonstrates Flory's jazz chops as it explains the connection with disc producer, Duke Robillard. A common origin (Rhode Island) and a common love for the blues guitar of Tiny Grimes, Billy Butler and Bill Jennings cement their relationship as drummer Chuck Riggs, bassist Marty Ballou and guests, Scott Hamilton on tenor sax (Chris was a staple of Scott's popular Quartet, '76-'93) and Sugar Ray Norcia on a vocal or two, round out the package. Everything swings here with the authenticity of the real deal, as it happened as opposed to how it was interpreted to have happened. Flory's significant contributions to the genre speak volumes. The material skirts jazz and swing standards but the more blues-based tracks, like Gene Ammons *Scam* and *I've Got A Right To Sing The Blues*. The tone achieved by Flory and Robillard on *Willow Weep For Me*, alone, will raise a goosebump or two. In fact, guitar fans will marvel at how seamlessly these two guitarists fit together and wonder, at the same time, why Flory hasn't made a bigger splash long before now. Perhaps with Duke's help, he will.

— By Eric Thom



Chris Flory with Duke Robillard and Friends

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Some pairings just seem natural when it comes to music, and this is one of them.

Flory was the guitarist in the Scott Hamilton Quartet from 1976 to '93. It was a hard-swinging bunch viewed as somewhat of a throwback, but I always thought they supplied jazz with some of

what it needed in those very odd mid-'70s days of fusion and other jazz forms. Flory always helped the group swing nicely. His comping and soloing were important parts of the band.

Robillard should need no introduction to guitarists. Starting with Roomful of Blues, his career has featured brilliant solo records, and recent wonderful efforts with jazz legend Herb Ellis. Here, he produces and supplies fine accompaniment and solos.

The opener, "Scam," is a bluesy swinger, as are many of the cuts, and everything is right on the money. The playing is crisp and inventive. The tune swings mightily around Flory's tight soloing. "Willow Weep For Me" is an old workhouse that sounds very nice and fresh in Flory's hands. His chordal work is beautiful, and his solo flawlessly incorporates chords, octaves, and single-lines. Same story on "I've Got A Right to Sing the Blues." "Shine" is an imaginative swinger. Listen to Flory get into his first solo, then jump around the changes. The cut also features wonderful sax soloing by Hamilton.

Several of the cuts feature vocals — one by Robillard and a couple by Sugar Ray Norcia. The feel is strictly uptown, and Robillard's solo additions help. Though bluesier than Flory, there can be no doubt about his "swingability."



Chris Flory