

[Review: Davis Coen – Magnolia Land](#)

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**DAVIS COEN**

**(Soundview Productions: SP1004)**

Following on from last year's "Blues Lights For Yours And Mine", the new release from South Carolina bluesman, Davis Coen, is a far different beast from that eclectic offering – a much more downhome blues album, recorded in Como, Mississippi, with the sessions overseen by studio owner Jimbo Mathus, who also contributed bass and guitar on some tracks, which were mainly recorded live in the studio.

The band basically features Davis Coen himself on vocals and guitar, two rhythm sections featuring the afore-mentioned Mathus on bass and Darren Dortin on drums, the other one, from the band Afrissippi, sees Justin Showah on bass and Kinney Kimbrough on drums – with keyboards from Lance Ashley and washboard by the mysteriously named Olga.

The 12 cuts are mainly self-penned, with a couple of traditional tunes and a cover apiece of a Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf song. The opening "Tired And Lonesome" rides on a swirling organ line from Lance Ashley, with Coen's fine voice to the fore, with the pace taken down on "Change In The Weather", before the slide-driven country blues of "Anna Ann".

Given some of the personnel and the recording location, the whole release has that sort of Memphis meets the North Mississippi Hill Country feel – as evident on the rocking blues of "Country Girl Blues" – more tough slide work here – and the soulful feel of "Nothing To Hold On To", with Ashley's organ playing featuring prominently.

"Eyes Like Diamonds" has a Memphis rockabilly feel with Coen and the band tearing it up in fine style, with the Hooker-style boogie of "Goin' Away Baby" following. Howling Wolf's classic "Natchez Burning" is given a faithful, but modern, rendition, with the album closer, Muddy Waters' "You're Gonna Miss Me" another showcase for Davis Coen's slide guitar work – and a fine conclusion to a most enjoyable release.

Davis Coen's profile seems to be on the rise and "Magnolia Land" is a welcome addition to his recorded output – highly recommended along with the previous "Blues Lights For Yours And Mine" – nothing fancy here, just good downhome blues recorded by fine musicians!

**GRAHAME RHODES**