

MUSIC STREET JOURNAL

MATT O'REE - SHELF LIFE

By Lorraine Kay

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Overall Review

Shelf Life is Matt O'Ree's third album and just like the two previous ones is a great showcase for the award-winning guitarist. O'Ree's guitar playing has won him many accolades including the 2006 Guitarmageddon "King of the Blues" 2006. And Shelf Life gives him lots of space to show what he can do. A versatile guitarist and vocalist, O'Ree plays out several moods and musical styles on this CD.

Featuring Matt O'Ree on guitars and vocals, Captain Hal B. Seizer on bass and Bob Pantella on drums and percussion, Shelf Life successfully marries rock 'n' roll with the blues well enough to equally hold the interest of fans of both genres. The big question is whether it is a blues album or a rock and roll album. It is impossible to answer that because it is truly both.

When it was first released Shelf Life won four awards for O'Ree at the 2005 Asbury Music Awards, winning Best Release, Song Of The Year (for "Saints And Sinners"), Best Guitarist and Best Blues Band. After listening to it once it is easy to see why. O'Ree's guitar playing is everything expected of an award winning guitarist, but his vocals are an even nicer surprise. Bold and gritty his vocals hang right in there along side some of the best in Southern rock like the Allman Brothers and the Vanzants.

Track by Track Review

Over: This is high-powered blues-rock with Matt out front on guitar and vocals. It makes you want to get up and dance.

Running Home: Slowing the tempo down just a bit, this is still Southern Rock in the tradition of Lynyrd Skynyrd. Easily commercial enough this one could be a hit on its own. There is even a touch of Paul Rodgers in the vocals on this one.

Marry You: There's a great funky groove on this one. The big guitar on the intro is reminiscent of Leslie West.

Saints and Sinners: This one rocks. The drums are out front and kind of funky – almost a Bo Diddley beat but not so much that they overwhelm O'Ree's gritty vocals.

Worth the Live: A slow blues groove ala "Fool for your Stockings," this is definitely a down and dirty hip grinder.

What You Got: Picking up the tempo again, this one jumps out at you with a slight Hendrix groove going on.

Back Home: Here we get another old bluesy feeling with some interesting surprise twists.

Alibis: This is straight ahead rock and roll. A guitar-driven song, the drums are pretty out-front as well.

Think About That: Here's another throw back to the Allman Brothers, especially on the guitar licks. This is another sexy dancing groove.

Good Thang: Oh watch out SRV! This one rocks but has definite Texas thing going on.

Another Man: Just another solid rock and roller, this drives hard but not too fast.

God Send: A nice ballad, this one slows down for the last dance. There are some nice bottle-neck slide licks going on in this one.

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