



# blues NEWS



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## Do Not Disturb

Mhmm

Banksville Vinyl LP + CD package

by Mike Garner

*I Don't*

*Mind;  
When The  
Blues Is  
Falling  
Down; The  
Bridge;  
Because  
I'm Down;  
Woodstock;  
Something  
Beautiful;  
If Mary  
Had A Face;  
Goodnight Paris*



I didn't expect to be reviewing a vinyl blues release in 2008. There is still a small, specialist vinyl market but Banksville Records have also included a CD in the same package to cover all the bases. They provide a lot of information about the audiophile process they have gone through - all analogue - and even the CD version is based on the vinyl's analogue mix "without any kind of post production", they say. Though I still have a lot of old vinyl, it rarely gets played. Since my Thorens turntable went with my first marriage, a long time ago, I only have a cheap turntable for digitising obscure records that never made it to CD re-issue. So audiophile enthusiasts take note - this review is about the music, not the audio or the vinyl. The CD's sound quality, though, is good; just as you would expect.

The vinyl plus CD package is not the only unusual feature of this release. It's

predominantly an Italian production, but some of the recording was done in London and then mastered in Italy. It features Paolo Baltaro, Gianni Opezzo, Boris Savoldelli, Sandro Marinoni plus guests. Baltaro, incidentally is the writer/arranger, plays drums bass and keyboards, and shares vocals on most songs. A further oddity is London DJ, Roger "the Bodger" Balfour, who introduces most tracks with a little rap about customers in an imaginary bar, regularly using the band's name 'Mhmm' as assort of branding exercise and generating a 'concept' feel to the whole project.

Well - after this long, technical introduction - what does it sound like? It's solidly in a blues-rock zone and broadly has a mix of blues rock with USA style horn arrangements. Opezzo's guitar work is strong and fluid. Salvodelli takes the main vocal duties. Both he and Baltaro sing very effectively in English - like natives, in fact - and though I've never, sadly heard of either, their virtuosity suggests they have many years of band experience between them.

There are only eight tracks on this album, coming out at about 40 minutes. The songs range from a heavy sounding " I Don't Mind" to an Alvin Lee sounding slow blues, "When The Blues Is Falling Down" (with lyrics from a Talentino novel, apparently). "The Bridge" is more moody and with uncredited harmonica. "Because I'm Down" is an uptempo romp that could be AC/DC in blues mode plus brass! The acoustic track is Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock", featuring also flute, backing vocals and slide guitar and captures the feel of 1970 well. "If Mary Had A Face" is also borrowed from a novel and is a minor key slow blues. "Goodnight Paris" isn't a blues but is an excellent song - worthy of radio play on rock format stations.

After a couple of listenings, Rodger "the Bodger" Balfour's track introductions became a bit wearing and I would have liked to be able to just skip them instead of having to fast forward. They didn't work for me. But overall - it's a good album of blues-rock. If hard rock is more your bag, you'll find this blues set will work for you, too - and if you're a blues/hard rock/vinyl freak - this will be a must have!

[www.banksvillerecords.com](http://www.banksvillerecords.com)

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