

BLUES REVUE

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Spotlight

CHRIS BERGSON BAND

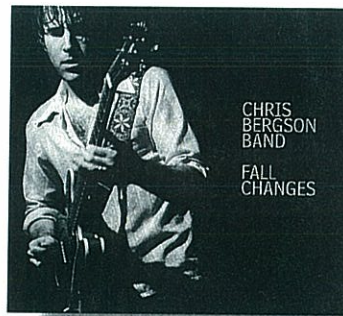
Fall Changes

2 Shirts 1003

Chris Bergson's youthful vitality combines with the gravelly voice and blues sensibility of an old soul. He has a flair for writing songs that ring true, especially when played by his group of some of the hippest, most talented musicians on today's scene. With Bergson's fiery guitar leading the way, Chris Berger (bass), Jay Collins (sax), Bruce Katz (keys), and Tony Leone (drums) work magic on this collection of mostly original songs that reflect the rhythms of their Brooklyn lives.

Fall Changes grabs hold immediately with the rocking "Gowanus Heights," a vivid portrait of urban life. Its jazzy groove, cinematic lyrics, and dazzling choir of horns (Collins on tenor sax, Erik Lawrence on baritone

New York Stories: An NYC jazz guitarist mines the blues for inspiration



sax, and Kenny Rampton on trumpet) soulfully convey the sense of surprise waiting around every city street corner; it's anchored by Leone and Berger, who find the funky heartbeat of the 'hood. "Sanctuary" is an unabashed declaration of love, and "Rain Beatin' Down," another upbeat love song, is goosed by Amy Helm's sweet 'n' sassy background vocals.

Like the season it describes, the title track harbors a melancholy feel,

exuding both nostalgia and apprehension as Bergson's edgy vocal counterpoints Katz's sparkling piano and Leone's scatty beats. The band tackles some interesting covers, including "When I Paint My Masterpiece"; Bergson hollers out Dylan's tale of love and art in a foreign land over Leone's funky drums and the joyful shouts of the horn trio. Bergson's emotional delivery of Jimi Hendrix's "Are You Experienced?" is catapulted into another dimension by Collins' otherworldly sax riffs.

Despite its subject matter, this album sports a relaxed, rural vibe that reflects the fact that it was cut at Levon Helm's studio in Woodstock, New York. The disc's layers reveal themselves subtly through repeated listens, but Bergson's stirring voice and glorious guitar command immediate attention.

KAY CORDTZ

BRavo!

The following are the most listened-to recordings in Blues Revue's offices during the making of this issue:

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