

# DELTA BOYS - Rough & Easy



GSRC1301

- 1) **I Saw The Light** - Hank Williams
- 2) **Let Me Play With Your Poodle** - Tampa Red
- 3) **Memory Pain** - Percy Mayfield
- 4) **Love Crazy** - Tampa Red
- 5) **Over The Hill** - John Martyn
- 6) **Kind Of Man** - Ellger / Achterholt
- 7) **Your Mind Is On Vacation** - Mose Allison
- 8) **Swing Along** - Gorke / Achterholt
- 9) **You Can't Judge A Book** - Willie Dixon
- 10) **Blues Is A Woman** - Lou Rawls
- 11) **Bluelight Boogie** - Louis Jordan
- 12) **Shine** - Ed Roland
- 13) **Can't Get No Loving On The Telephone** - Bob Greenlee
- 14) **I'll Fly Away** - Albert E. Brumley
- 15) **When You're Smiling** - Fisher / Goodman / Shay
- 16) **If The River Was Whiskey** - Sleepy John Estes
- 17) **Someday** - Robert Nighthawk
- 18) **Glory Of Love** - Big Bill Broonzy

On **Rough & Easy**, the eagerly anticipated sophomore effort by the **Delta Boys**, two of Germany's most accomplished blues musicians, **Gerd Gorke** & **Michael van Merwyk**, bring their unique artistry to an important musical tradition.

Once upon a time, from the 1940s through the folk revival of the 1960s and well into the 1970s (when they stopped speaking to one another), the blues duo of Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee charmed audiences with their special brand of folk storytelling and acoustic guitar-and-harp virtuosity. In more recent decades, acts such as Cephas & Wiggins and Paul Rishell & Annie Raines have carried the torch forward. Combining upbeat energy with authentic down-home feeling, Gorke & van Merwyk are gradually taking their place alongside those greats.

This year, harp player extraordinaire **Gerd Gorke** is celebrating 30 years as an important contributor to the European blues scene. During that time, he's played more than 2500 concerts and accompanied such luminaries as Louisiana Red, Sam Myers, Dave Myers and Jeanne Carroll. Guitarist **Michael van Merwyk** has spent hundreds of nights paying his dues onstage and has recently emerged as a rising international star: His band Bluesoul placed second in the band category at the 2013 International Blues Challenge – the highest finish ever for a non-American act!

On **Rough & Easy**, the twosome interprets country blues classics by Tampa Red and Big Bill Broonzy, traditional American roots and spiritual numbers as well as a handful of original compositions. The repertoire includes familiar titles like „I Saw The Light“ and „Glory of Love,“ but also demonstrates the duo's thorough knowledge of the genre with song choices such as Mose Allison's „Your Mind Is On Vacation“ and Lou Rawls' „Blues Is A Woman.“ Gorke and van Merwyk share vocal duties throughout, each one possessing a voice as deep and rich as Delta soil.

Musically, the two veterans show why they are considered among Europe's finest. Gorke dazzles with his astonishing dexterity on Tampa Red's „Let Me Play With Your Poodle“ as he does over and over throughout the album. Van Merwyk offers nimble fingerpicking, smooth slide guitar and also steps out of the duo format with a sparkling diddley bow performance on Sleepy John Estes' „If The River Was Whiskey.“ The 18 tracks come in at just over an hour – meaning these two pros never give you too much of a good thing. With this diverse song list in place, the duo set out to make a studio recording that's honest and authentic. „Our idea was to transport the laid back, immediate atmosphere of our concerts into the listener's living room,“ explains Michael van Merwyk. To that end, they recorded the album in its entirety in one day at the Claus Grabke Studios (Thumb, Sebel, The Picturebooks). There's not

a single overdub on the record. „We used vintage microphones and didn't do any kind of digital processing afterward. This way, we managed to capture the raw, direct and relaxed atmosphere of a live performance.“ It's no coincidence the album is called **Rough & Easy**.

With this extraordinary new song collection in hand, the Delta Boys will be spending the rest of 2013 (and beyond) doing what they do best – pulling on their overalls and bringing their brand of premium acoustic blues to live audiences throughout the land. Sonny & Brownie are sure to be looking down from their separate rooms in blues heaven, smiling.

*(Vincent Abbate, November 2013)*

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