

Mp3 Bo Ramsey - Stranger Blues



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Details: BO RAMSEY Born and raised in the blue-collar Mississippi River town of Burlington, Iowa in 1951, Robert Franklin 'Bo' Ramsey not only played a vital role in shaping Eastern Iowa's distinctive blues-rock hybrid, but has continued in his still-vibrant career as a performer, much-in-demand producer, recording session guitarist and "hired gun" in touring bands of high-profile national acts. Ramsey broke out in the early-'70s with the seminal Mother Blues Band, a honking powerhouse which also featured Iowa blues legends Joe Price and Patrick Hazell. In the latter part of the decade, the guitarist broke off to form Bo Ramsey The Sliders. Merging the sounds of his beloved Chess Records blues masters with Rolling Stones muscle and swampy, river basin funk, Ramsey The Sliders enjoyed a strong following on the Midwest circuit for nearly a dozen years. Following a brief hiatus in the late-'80s, Bo began a collaboration/friendship with revered folksinger Greg Brown that continues to the present. Ramsey has played guitar on ten of Brown's discs, and produced/co-produced 1990's *Down In There*, 1994's *The Poet Game*, 1996's *Further In*, 1997's Grammy-nominated *Slant 6 Mind*, 2000's *Covenant* and 2006's *Evening Calls* (all on Red House), as well as 2000's *Over And Under* and 2004's *Honey In The Lion's Head* for Trailer Records. The pair has toured the U.S. and abroad extensively. The past 16 years have brought a dizzying array of cross-pollinations. In between gigs with Greg Brown, Ramsey briefly co-fronted a band with Nashville singer/songwriter Kevin Gordon, led his own bands (The Backsliders and The Middle Of Nowhere), and for the past few years has recorded and toured with singer/songwriter Pieta Brown. Bo produced (and added his guitars to) Iowa City treasure Dave Moore's *Breaking Down To 3* (Red House) Tucson roots-rocker Teddy Morgan's *Lost Love Highways* (Hightone) and, most recently, acclaimed singer/songwriter Jeffrey Foucault's *Ghost Repeater*, due in 2006 on Signature Sounds. He also

co-produced Dave Zollo's *Uneasy Street* (Trailer), Pieta Browns self-titled debut (Trailer), *I Never Told* (Trailer Records) and *In The Cool* (Valley Entertainment), Kevin Gordon's *Down To The Well* (Shanachie) and perhaps most notably alt-country superstar Lucinda Williams' *Essence* (Lost Highway). The Lucinda connection began in the early '90s, when Williams heard Ramsey's 1991 masterpiece, *Down To Bastrop*, in (of all places) a New Zealand record shop while on tour. She subsequently contacted Bo, and the two became fast friends. Ramsey played on her Grammy-winning *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road* (Mercury), and joined her band for part of that disc's tour. Bo produced and played on the basic tracks for Lucinda's follow-up, the Grammy-nominated *Essence* again joining her band on tour in support of that record. All told, Ramsey and his trademark scruffy cowboy hat garnered two TV appearances with Williams on "The Late Show With David Letterman" and one each on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and "Late Night With Conan O'Brien." Other tube appearances include playing with Lucinda and Elvis Costello in the first segment of CMT's "Crossroads" series and again with Lucinda in award-winning German film director Wim Wenders' "Soul Of A Man" segment for Martin Scorsese's seven-part series on the blues for public television. In addition, Bo's distinctive, inimitable guitar sounds have graced the recorded works of numerous artists, including extraordinary Nashville singer/songwriter Kate Campbell's *Visions Of Plenty* (Compass), folk god Pete Seeger with Larry Long on *If I Had A Song . . . : The Songs Of Pete Seeger, Vol. II* (Appleseed), a track on alt-folkie Ani DiFranco's *Swing Set* (Righteous Babe), and two tracks which he also produced on country-roots queen Iris DeMent's latest disc, *Lifeline* (Flariella). He's also appeared on discs by R.B. Morris, Mark Stuart, Brother Trucker, Joe Price and Jennifer Danielson. Oh, yeah, and he also produced a six-song session for Joan Baez The demand for Ramsey's unmistakable imprint on other artists' work has tended to keep his own work on the back-burner, but Bo's a fine, evocative and passionate writer in his own right and a commanding singer and performer. Bo Ramsey HAS recorded nine albums under his own name, three of which the aforementioned gem, *Down To Bastrop*, 1995's *Bo Ramsey The Backsliders: Live* and 1997's *In The Weeds* remain in print on Trailer Records. His latest is "Stranger Blues," a long-promised and much anticipated project rounding up Bo's inspirational nuggets drawn from the likes of Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Elizabeth Cotton, Sonny Boy Williamson and others. Produced by Bo and Pieta Brown, "Stranger Blues" features appearances by Greg Brown, Joe Price, Pieta Brown, Benson Ramsey and Ricky Peterson. The disc will be released on Bo Ramsey Records and will be available through

boramseyin summer, 2006. Bottom line: this ol' Iowa boy surely can rockit always has, always will . . .

Jim Musser, March 2006

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