

# Mp3 Nap "don't Forget The Blues" Turner - Live At City Blues



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You know you are listening to the words and experiences of a man who doesn't just sing but has lived the blues. 11 MP3 Songs BLUES: Blues Vocals, BLUES: Mellow Blues Details: Mick Rainsford Blues Rhythm the Gospel Truth England When Nap Turner sings "I am a way of life .... the after affects of guns, captivity, religion, rejection, hope and sin. I am a soulful scream and a man as one. I'm a personal expression. I am the blues.", you know you are listening to the words and experiences of a man who doesn't just sing but has lived the blues. Born in West Virginia, Turner moved with his family to Washington DC in 1943, where at the age of 14 he built himself a home-made bass that he was still playing when he first turned professional. Turner immersed himself in the local music scene jamming with the likes of Sonny Stitt, Gene Ammons and Webster Young, and on a hiatus to Norfolk, Virginia, playing and recording with Margie Day and The Griffin Brothers. Despite his undoubted musical ability, Turner's life was also plagued by his drug addictions which resulted in numerous prison sentences and hospitalisation, once nearly dying from septicaemia as a result of using a dirty needle. In the 70s Turner finally kicked his drug habit and by the time Wayne Kahn met him in 1995, he was a Washington blues institution through his performances on Pacifica Radio's WPFW, 89.3FM. Recognising his talent, Kahn featured Turner singing "Lover And The Married Woman" on "The Blues You Would Just Hate To Lose Vol 1", his smooth and soulful baritone voice being the ideal vehicle for this Percy Mayfield classic. Kahn has now followed that with Turner's first full length recording, the numbers culled from various live performances at Washington's City Blues during 1998. The influence of Percy Mayfield permeates every note that Turner sings, so it is not surprising to find five Mayfield numbers featured on this set. 'Walking On A Tightrope' finds the band swinging effortlessly as the horns glide sensuously in and out of the mix,

Turner's superb phrasing echoing the influences of his mentor, although his voice has a tougher more downbeat feel. The funky swing of 'Painful Party' and the mellow lasciviousness of 'Highway's Like A Woman' with it's moody horn charts and beautifully understated guitar from Rusty Bogart, are further Mayfield gems. Bogart is again in magnificent form as his moodily introspective guitar paves the way for Turner's deeply soulful vocals on Lowell Fulson's 'Room With A View', while Turner's 'down in the alley' vocals tell their own story as St Louis Jimmy meets Percy Mayfield on 'Going Down Slow'. However, if one song reflects Turner's music more than any other, it has to be his own 'Good Morning Blues', where the seductive swing of the rhythm section, Charley Hubel's sultry sax and Bogart's tasteful Duke Robillard influenced guitar create a musical pastiche that echoes Turner's words 'I'm a personal expression, I am the blues'. If the unrelenting onslaught of distorted guitar histrionics that often passes itself off as blues today, makes you long for the cool sophisticated blues of a bygone era, buy this CD and relax for an hour in the blues world of Nap Turner.

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Thank God for independent labels and their owners/founders. Given the major multinational record labels' reluctance to support authentic blues artists (a truth allergy?) bluesmen/women are forced to rely on small record labels started up by frustrated fans who decide to take matters into their own hands. Despite the high mortality rate (most labels manage just one release before their demise) there is never a shortage of new hopefuls. The ones that do survive are usually the ones that don't let the threat of financial losses deter them, i.e. "music is art and I'm in it to create great works of art, not because I'm hoping to become a millionaire," (anonymous mental patient). All kidding aside, it's really wonderful when you have labels/owners out there that are more concerned with getting great music/artists on tape despite the ugly financial reality, and their completed projects many times will end up being priceless and timeless creative masterpieces. While access to the masses is rigidly controlled by the multinational record labels (ownership of radio stations, stores and video channels, not to mention ownership of print media), small labels can still survive, even if it's solely through sales of CDs to club/concert audiences, as long as the artist is dynamic and a good salesman. Right On Rhythm's Wayne Kahn possesses two mandatory traits required for longevity in the record business: stubbornness and a great ear for legitimate talent. With Nap Turner's debut Kahn now has 6 releases under his belt and Turner's disc culminates years of hopes and promises. Kahn's desire to get Turner on record was an obsession and even though it's a live' album, it's really more of a studio recording with no second takes and a live' audience in attendance, and it works wonderfully I'm happy to

say. Nap Turner is, for all intents and purposes, the ruling patriarch of the Washington, D.C. blues scene, a fragmented but always vibrant area with loads of history and dozens of unique talents. Nap has gained notoriety through exploits of both musical and criminal activity, and we can't forget the line separating types of fame is virtually invisible to a public intent on worship of heroes. Thankfully, Nap Turner realized there was a hidden price tag called 'peace of mind/soul' and he opted to follow his heart and become a bluesman instead of another tragic statistic. Very few bluesmen in this era of guitar/harmonica virtuosos can become stars solely through their singing and personal magnetism and artist-audience rapport, but Nap's roots go back to a time when Jimmy Rushing and Jimmy Witherspoon and Arthur Prysock held audiences captive through power of personality, and Turner is a 1999 version of an old-time real blues singer. This disc can best be described as a live' performance of a one man play in which the star presents his definition of the blues and his life story all rolled into one. Nap has lived the blues with over 50 years of performing and life in the clubs, and he found himself being especially drawn to the poignant lyrics of Percy Mayfield, the "Poet Laureate of the Blues' and of the 11 tunes tackled on this disc, 5 are Mayfield compositions. There is a very intimate feel to this disc with the listener having a sense of being at a table just feet from Turner. The backup crew of musicians is impeccable with a smooth sound that is a hybrid jazz/blues mixture similar to what one would find on a 1960 Witherspoon album. Young veterans mostly, four of them are with Washington's premiere swing/jump band, The J Street Jumpers (Maple Shade Records), while bassist John Previti worked with the late Danny Gatton. Sometimes smooth cocktail/lounge blues can be little more than a cure for insomnia but in Turner's case, I found this disc totally riveting and the eight times I listened through this disc I became more and more of a Turner fan each time. Rusty Bogart lays down lots of beautiful T-Bone-influenced guitar work throughout and Art Gerstein is just wonderful on piano, sounding like a cross between Earl Hines and Sammy Price. Bhagwan Khalsa handles bass on the majority of cuts and he gives an excellent account of himself. Percy Mayfield has to be smiling down from Heaven when he hears Nap giving "The Highway Is Like A Woman" the ultimate workout. Bogart is just awesome on guitar. Nap Turner has to be overjoyed, satisfied and at peace all at the same time. Ditto for Wayne Kahn. Their goal was the same, and together they achieved it magnificently. If Nap never records again, he'll have this close-to-perfect work to ensure his spot in blues history. But we can all hope that this highly successful debut CD is just the start of a whole new chapter for velvet-voiced Nap Turner. 5 bottles for a very auspicious debut disc. This may

become Wayne Kahn's first big 'hit' and let's hope it encourages more obsessions. - Andy Grigg, Real Blues Magazine

IL BLUES MAGAZINE Italy Fall 1999 The exact wording of the artist's name on the CD cover is Nap "Don't Forget the Blues" Turner, but for obvious design and/or space considerations, we decided not to use his name in its entirety here. With this premise, we remember that, on the notes of a similar refrain, Napoleon Turner left the stage of the Ariston in Sanremo, amid the cheers of the crowd, during the First Sanremo Blues Festival in 1988. More than 10 years later this CD comes to us containing a live performance at the City Blues Caf in Washington, D.C., the city that the 12-year-old Turner had moved to from West Virginia in 1943 along with his family. At age 14, he built his first bass with a 5-Gallon Pepsi syrup can. In the '50s Turner worked with Sonny Stitt, Gene Ammons and Webster Young, and during this same period fell into the trap of drugs, an illness that struck many jazzmen of the era. Even Charlie Parker--according to the liner notes--was unable to convince him to kick the habit. In the '60s, between stints in jail, and after a period spent in Norfolk, Virginia, he landed again in D.C. and rediscovered himself as vocalist and interpreter of Percy Mayfield. In fact, five songs on the disk bear the signature of this late Louisiana songwriter. They are, for the most part, slow jazz-blues of intense melodic lyricism, counterpointed by the excellent guitar of Rusty Bogart??very skilled in his phrasing of the pieces??by the enveloping brushes of Jeff Lodson and the persuasive saxophone of Charley Hubel ("The Hunt Is On," "Highway's Like A Woman" and " "Lover And The Married Woman"). On the other hand, we find funky sections in the other two revisitations of Mayfield: "Walking On A Tightrope" and "Painful Party." Appearing only on these two songs, Brad Clements' trumpet shines, acting as a binding force--along with the full-bodied and pulsing bass--on the effervescent sinuosity of these intriguing up-tempo pieces. Nap's beautiful and cavernous voice always keeps the situation under control, whether the blues approaches the styling of the Windy City ("Goin' Down Slow"), or when it recalls the West Coast ("Room With A View" by Lowell Fulson). In the first one there's help from the harmonica of Charley Hubel, a musician with a history of time spent in the court of J.B. Hutto, and from the excellent piano of Arthur Gerstein. In the second song we again find Bogart's subtle phrasing, which re-proposes itself in "Good Morning Blues"--Napoleon's only composition--another fascinating slow jazz blues number. The album closes with a delicate poem from the book "Poems On Love And Life" by Frederick Douglas Harper, gently placed above the background of "When a Man Loves a Woman" by Percy Sledge. The song is interwoven with the brilliant, glittering sax of Memphis-born Bonnie Ross Jr. Crawford, a faithful orchestra

member of Ray Charles in the transition years between the '50s and the '60s . The theme is re-baptized for the occasion as "Wedding Pledge". Only the rendition of "Baby What You Want Me To Do" by the legendary Jimmy Reed is slightly limp and below par, but this does not invalidate a CD of considerable substance, recommended for those who love the atmospheres of Charles Brown, Jimmy Cheatham's Sweet Baby Blues Band, or Floyd Dixon and company. -Fog

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