



1. Scuttle Buttin'
2. Couldn't Stand The Weather
3. The Things (That) I Used To Do
4. Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)
5. Cold Shot
6. Tin Pan Alley
(aka Roughest Place In Town)
7. Honey Bee
8. Stang's Swang



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STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
AND **DOUBLE TROUBLE**

COULDN'T STAND THE WEATHER

There was a galvanizing moment in 1983 at the Beacon Theater in New York when Stevie Ray Vaughan made believers out of us all.



photo by Robert Mathieu

We had heard the hype about this Texas Tornado, about how he had been killing audiences down in Austin for years with his fretboard pyrotechnics and heroic, Albert King-inspired string bending prowess. That was indeed no lie. We had checked out *Texas Flood* and knew the guy could burn. *Every* guitar player from Texas could burn. But there was an aura of mystique surrounding SRV that set him apart from all the other hotshot six-stringers who came down the pike.

On the surface was his tough Texas demeanor: the cowboy boots, the plume in his black Palladin hat, the steely-eyed scowl and gunslinger machismo captured in Brad Holland's cover illustration for *Texas Flood*. There was his indelible tie to Jimi Hendrix, the Sixties guitar god to whom Stevie Ray invariably paid tribute in concert through his passionate reading of "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)." For a generation too young to have caught Hendrix's cathartic act, SRV was the living embodiment of that fabled legacy. There was also the audacity of him blowing off David Bowie's *Let's Dance* tour of 1983 in order to pursue his own thing with Double Trouble. This defiant, stick-to-your-guns stance made Stevie Ray a hero in his hometown.

But beneath the surface of this myth-in-the-making beat the heart of a bluesman: the real deal, the authentic article. On record and particularly in concert, Stevie

Ray played with a rare blend of scorching intensity and blues-drenched authority. He delved down deep into himself to pull up those toe-curling blue notes, rocking back on the heels of his cowboy boots as he muscled those strings, grimacing as he squeezed all the juice out of each note while projecting out to the back row of a concert hall with hurricane force. He mesmerized audiences with his own ferocious take on Albert King's blues power.



photo by Stephanie Chernikowski

On this autumn evening at the Beacon Theater, we were swept away by his volatile and flamboyant presence. No guitarist had generated this kind of sheer electricity, this combination of flash and substance, in a long, long time.

I had the chance to talk with Stevie Ray Vaughan aboard his cramped band bus, just prior to that memorable show in the fall of 1983. He was polite though not exactly forthcoming: a bit shy and unassuming at first, offering little eye contact

and speaking in soft, guarded tones. (I think he even called me "sir" at the outset, even though he was born just one week after me, on October 3, 1954.) The ice was suddenly broken when into the bus climbed John Hammond Sr., the venerable and legendary talent scout whose discoveries over the years had ranged from Billie Holiday and Charlie Christian to Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen—and who had landed SRV his contract with Epic.

Hammond acknowledged the interview taking place, flashed a paternal smile at Stevie Ray and offered a brief testimonial before leaving: “What he’s doing is phenomenal. The first Texas blues guitar player I ever saw in the flesh was T-Bone Walker back in 1936, and he’s in that great tradition. It’s a wonderful tradition. T-Bone used to do what Stevie does—play the guitar behind his neck and everything else. What a showman! Nice guy too, just like Stevie Ray.”

During our interview, Vaughan gradually loosened up and began talking about his memories of early gigs in Austin, about the inspiration he had gotten from players like Lonnie Mack, Albert King, Freddie King and particularly Jimi Hendrix. He mentioned his fondness for jazz guitar greats Django Reinhardt and Kenny Burrell; and for Hammond B-3 organ greats Jimmy McGriff and Richard “Groove” Holmes. He touched on his aspirations (“I lay in bed at night and hear big bands...sounds funny but it’s true”) and he offered one fantasy (“I’d like to jam with Jimi Hendrix and an organ player”). He also spoke with a kind of awe about his older brother Jimmie, whom he called “my very favorite guitar player.”

Later that night, Stevie Ray proceeded to slay an excitant New York crowd with his sheer command of his ‘59 Stratocaster and his undeniable charisma, working his way through blistering renditions of “Rude Mood,” “Love Struck Baby,” “Texas Flood” and Buddy Guy’s “Mary Had A Little Lamb” with steamroller momentum. His inevitable and chilling rendition of “Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)” brought the Beacon audience to its feet, straining to get a glimpse of the tough young Texan writhing and wailing on his Strat with reckless abandon.

A few months after that gig, I wrote in *Guitar World*: “In an age where musical tastes are being shaped by technological innovations, where sensibilities are being assaulted by arsenals of Linn drums and Fairlights and Mini Moogs; it’s downright refreshing to see someone playing straight from the gut again. With his stripped-down attack and electrifying prowess, Stevie Ray Vaughan has refocused attention back to the bare essentials—guitar, bass and drums in a basic 12-bar format. He is the hottest thing to come out of Dallas since J.R. Ewing.”

The following summer saw the release of Stevie Ray’s eagerly anticipated follow-up album, *Couldn’t Stand The Weather*. By this time, the coronation was complete: A blues messiah had arrived. With a relentless touring schedule and a slick new video for the title track airing on fledgling MTV, Stevie Ray Vaughan had become something of a force unto himself in the industry, touching off a mid-’80s blues revival that recalled the mid-’60s blues boom. His playing on *Couldn’t Stand The Weather*, meanwhile, was even more authoritative than on *Texas Flood*.

He comes out of the chute with his wheels screeching on “Scuttle Buttin’,” the scorching instrumental that became a concert favorite that summer of ‘84. The title track, fueled by SRV’s slinky rhythm guitar work and featuring brother Jimmie on second guitar, shows allusions to Hendrix; the cover of “Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)” makes the connection more obvious. Stevie Ray delivers Guitar Slim’s slow blues classic, “The Things (That) I Used To Do,” in convincing fashion and cranks out the catchy Texas shuffle “Cold Shot” with a touch of sly swagger.

On the mournful minor-key blues standard “Tin Pan Alley (aka Roughest Place In Town),” he pulls out all the stops with an emotionally charged, bravado performance that would send chills up the spine of even the most hardened blues enthusiast. His own boogie blues, “Honey Bee,” is rough and upbeat, while the instrumental “Stang’s Swang”—an homage to Grant Green augmented by Stan Harrison’s gutsy tenor sax playing—closes out the album in swinging, understated fashion.

Released in May 1984, *Couldn’t Stand The Weather* would reach #31 among Billboard pop albums by the end of the year; it was certified gold in late 1985, and today is double platinum. Stevie Ray would earn his second Grammy Award nomination for this sophomore outing, when “Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)” was cited in the Best Rock Instrumental category. His meteoric rise to fame had begun, and a lifetime of triumph lay ahead of him.

And yet the soft-spoken young Texan’s goals remained simple and clear. “We’re going to keep playing our hearts out,” Stevie Ray Vaughan told *Down Beat* on the eve of this album’s release. “We hope we can get a lot of people to listen but if they don’t—well, we’re still going to go all-out anyway. You know, I just love to play the blues. What else is there?”

—Bill Milkowski

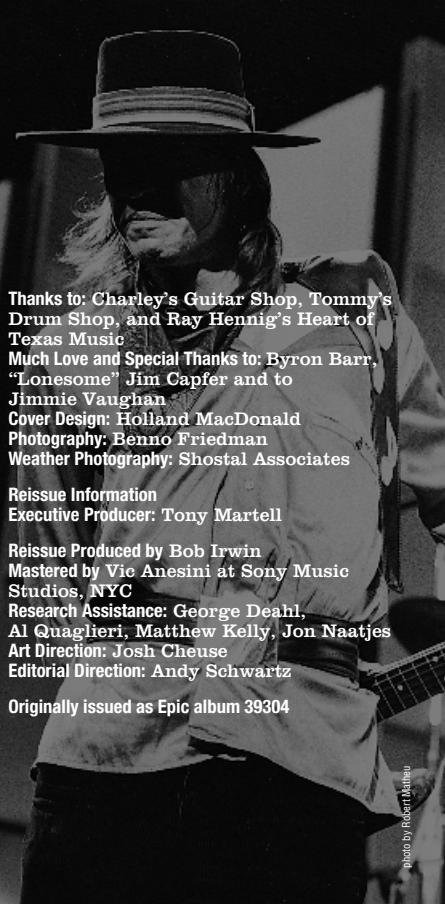
Bill Milkowski is a regular contributor to *Jazz Times* magazine. He is the author of *JACO: THE EXTRAORDINARY AND TRAGIC LIFE OF JACO PASTORIUS* (Miller Freeman Books) and *ROCKERS, JAZZBOS & VISIONARIES* (Billboard Books).

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-S.R. Vaughan-

2. Couldn't Stand The Weather

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3. The Things (That) I Used To Do

-E. Jones-

4. Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)

-J. Hendrix-

5. Cold Shot

-M. Kindred-W.C. Clark-

6. Tin Pan Alley (aka Roughest Place In Town)

-R. Geddis-

7. Honey Bee

-S.R. Vaughan-

8. Stang's Swang

-S.R. Vaughan-



Executive Producer: John Hammond
Produced by: Stevie Ray Vaughan, Chris Layton,
Tommy Shannon, Richard Mullen, and Jim Capfer
Engineer: Richard Mullen
Assistant Engineer: Rob "Ace" Eaton

Stevie Ray Vaughan: vocals, guitars

Tommy Shannon: bass

Chris "Whipper" Layton: drums

Additional Musicians:

Jimmie Vaughan: 2nd guitar on "Couldn't Stand The Weather" and "The Things (That) I Used To Do"

Fran Christina: drums on "Stang's Swang"

Stan Harrison: tenor saxophone

Also Available on Epic:

on CD and Cassette

Greatest Hits (66217)

Greatest Hits 2 (65873)

Texas Flood (65870)

Soul to Soul (65872)

In Step (65874)

The Sky Is Crying (47390)

Live Alive (40511)

In The Beginning (53168)

Live At Carnegie Hall (68163)

A Tribute To Stevie Ray Vaughan (67599)

Family Style (46225)

on Video

Pride and Joy (49069)

Live At The El Macambo (49111)

Live From Austin Texas (50130)

A Tribute To Stevie Ray Vaughan (50144)


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