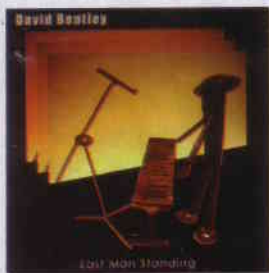


## AL HENSLEY CATCHES UP WITH THE LATEST BLUES RELEASES.



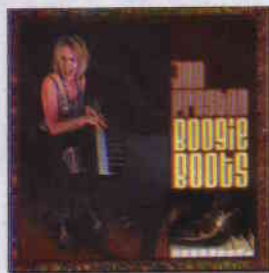
**DAVID BENTLEY**  
**LAST MAN STANDING**  
INDEPENDENT  
(WWW.DAVIDBENTLEY.COM.AU)

For decades a mainstay of the Brisbane jazz and blues scene, singer-songwriter David Bentley combines elements of both genres into this 51-minute set of ten original compositions plus a funky re-working of

Mose Allison's 'Everybody's Cryin' Mercy'. A gifted pianist, Bentley achieved overseas chart success in the mid-'70s having penned 'In a Broken Dream' for Rod Stewart with whom he recorded the song in 1969 while working in Britain with the band Python Lee Jackson. Bentley has lost none of his creative edge as this, his first release in over ten years, clearly testifies.

Playing piano, electric piano and organ, Bentley leaves plenty of room for his top-class team of session musicians to perform some scorching solos. Effectively weaving soulful vocal backing, vibrant horns, reeds and cello around a skin-tight rhythm section and the guitars of Kirk L'Orange and Jim Kelly, he varies the combination according to the melodic patterns of each piece. From the double-shuffle rhythms of 'All Through Talking' to the fonkified New Orleans backbeat of 'Lie To Me' and its kindred James Booker/Dr. John-inspired second-liner 'Chiang Rai Hilton', Bentley's keyboard prowess is highly impressive. His innovative jazz stylings on 'Refugee' and 'Only Human' display finely-honed arranging talents.

Originality is a keystone of his lyrical work. Musing on a diverse range of themes, Bentley's melancholy, urbanely-sophisticated discourse 'Irretrievably Blue' and gospel-tinged affirmation 'Soul Rites' give way to socio-political commentary in 'Passport To the Blues' where he asks "Do we really need a sequel to World Wars One and Two?" Not content to rest on his laurels as an award-winning journalist, Bentley strives for perfection as a musician and, as such, deserves parallel recognition.



**JAN PRESTON**  
**BOOGIE BOOTS**  
INDEPENDENT  
(WWW.JANPRESTON.COM)

Australia's acknowledged queen of boogie-woogie piano, Sydney-based Jan Preston returns with a brand new release, following up her critically-acclaimed 2006 all-instrumental album. This time she is back

at the mic performing her sensual vocals while displaying her keyboard finesse backed by guitar, upright bass and drums, plus occasional Hammond organ, sax, trombone and tuba. A strong emphasis on originals pervades here, Preston having penned seven of the CD's 12 sides. They include the Jimmy Yancey-flavoured opening title track, the stop-time shuffle 'Driving Back To Sydney' and 'Small Town Girl', a classic styled blues recalling her years growing up in her native New Zealand.

Making their debut on her previous release, Preston's 'Eat Chocolate and Cry' and 'You're the One For Me' reappear on *Boogie Boots* complete with full sets of lyrics. Preston's strong affiliation with the great New Orleans rhythm and blues pianists is represented by spirited readings of Huey 'Piano' Smith's 'Rockin' Pneumonia', Fats Domino's 'The Big Beat' and Professor Longhair's 'She Walks Right In'. Her masterful command of ragtime piano is demonstrated on 'Winnie Played the Rag', a personal tribute to Winifred Atwell, one of Preston's earliest inspirations. Closing the 44-minute disc, Preston poignantly performs in solo piano/vocal mode her own interpretation of Leadbelly's immortal 'Goodnight Irene'.



**HEY GRINGO**  
**LIVE FROM THE VAULT**  
INDEPENDENT  
(WWW.HEYGRINGO.NET)

Prolific Melbourne songwriters Daryl Roberts and Paul Gadsby are back with a swag of new original songs on this, the fourth independent album release by their band Hey Gringo. Keyboardist-

vocalist Roberts and guitarist-vocalist Gadsby, accompanied by their sax-playing running partner Sean Vagg, are once again supplemented by a host of highly-reputed musicians including Spectrum's Peter Robertson on drums, Mike Rudd on harmonica and vocals and Bill Putt on lap steel. Also appearing on this 80-minute set recorded live at West Melbourne's Sound Vault last November are Blackfeather lead singer Neale Johns and vocalist-percussionist Marcus Alexander from the Nudist Funk Orchestra.

Blazing a trail of sweaty Down Under R&B, Roberts wrote or co-wrote ten of the CD's songs, Gadsby contributing another six, and the band capping it off with a refreshing take on Wilburt Harrison's 'Let's Work Together'. Funk, swing and soulful harmonies are again the main ingredients and the band's combined instrumental expertise is a strong point. Alexander's big-toned voice rendering 'Get the Funk Out', Johns' robust lead singing on 'Down the Track' and Rudd's rock-coated vocals on 'Limbo Man' counter-balance the smokier, sedately jazz-inflected vocal stylings of Roberts and Gadsby. If the energy seems to diminish slightly after the first half, it picks up again towards the climax where bandleader Roberts introduces his players stretching out with rousing solos on a boogie-laced opus entitled 'I Can't Say No'.



**BLUE DUKES**  
**WANTED**  
INDEPENDENT  
(WWW.BLUEDUKES.COM.AU)

Coming together in 2003, Melbourne outfit Blue Dukes won Best New Blues Talent at the 2006 MBAS Vic/Tas Blues Song Awards. Describing their music as blues-rock, the power trio consists of

ex-Carson bassist-guitarist-harmonica player Ian Ferguson, former Dutch Tilders & the Blues Club drummer Winston Galea