

# **NASHVILLE BLUES SOCIETY – JUNE 21, 2012**

## **OMAR AND THE HOWLERS**

### **I'M GONE**

### **BIG GUITAR MUSIC 1201**

**I'M GONE–ALL ABOUT THE MONEY–DRUNKARD'S PARADISE–WILD AND FREE–DOWN TO THE STATION–LONE STAR BLUES–OMAR'S BOOGIE–GOIN' BACK TO TEXAS–LET ME HOLD YOU–MOVE UP TO MEMPHIS–I'M MAD AGAIN–TAKE ME BACK**

Omar Kent Dykes grew up in McComb, MS, in the Sixties in a racially-divided South. He picked up his guitar at age twelve, and, luckily for us blues fans, never put it down. He'd sneak out at night and go into black neighborhoods to absorb the blues being played there, and became accepted into that musical fraternity. To mark his 50TH anniversary of making music, he has just released "I'm Gone," eleven originals and one cool John Lee Hooker cover.

As Omar improved and matured on the guitar, his father would drive him to nearby towns to immerse him into all genres' of music, and that's the common thread on this collection—any of these cuts would've been right at home on the Hossman's late-night WLAC playlist from back in the day.

Omar's larger-than-life, Howlin' Wolf-like vocal delivery and that huge, fat-toned guitar sound leads the charge on this set, and he holds nothin' back. Check out the shufflin', Diddley beat of "Wild And Free," while "All About The Money" takes a tough look at TV evangelists who are obsessed with "the root of all evil." "Lone Star Blues" and "Omar's Boogie" are standout instrumentals, while the sad tale of a man who got fired from his job and now finds solace in the bottom of a bottle is "Drunkard's Paradise," with its definitive country twang. And, the Fifties-inspired slow-drag of "Let Me Hold You" is perhaps Omar's best ballad, ever.

We had two favorites, too, and they bookend the album. Leading off is the stop-time blast of rockabilly boogie, "I'm Gone," while the set closes with "Take Me Back," also done in rockabilly fashion. It serves as Omar's autobiography, and is also written in honor of his father.

Omar and the Howlers have stood the test of time, continuing to bring the best of rockin' blues to crowds as small as five and as large as a full stadium. Celebrate his golden anniversary as a bluesman with "I'm Gone!" Until next time...Sheryl and Don Crow.