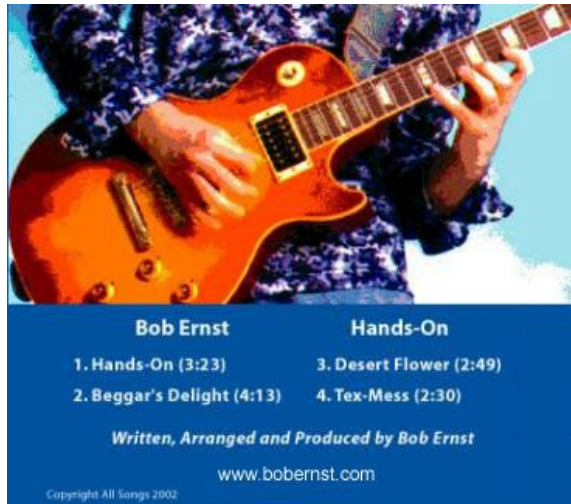




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BOB ERNST
~ HANDS-ON ~



Visit Bob's site boernst.com
where you can buy the Hands-On CD.

THE ARTIST & THE DISC

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The new CD "Hands-On" by Bob Ernst answered a question I've been often pondered. What could it sound like if the players of the past collaborate with the players of the future? The best of both worlds if you will. Because both generations will have something to offer. But the past is just that, and the future is unknown. But we do have the missing link between the two.....Bob Ernst, a player from New Jersey. Bob's "Hands-On" CD invokes memories of the past without sounding retro. By not going back to the past, but bringing it forward to the present. Keeping it roots blues/rock without the pomposity that much of today's rock comes with. Looking at Bob's influences it makes sense. It reads like the who's who of classic (page, beck, hendrix, blackmore) and modern (vivian campbell, van halen, gary moore) rock and jazz (dimeola, coryell, coltrane). It saddens me when I read a new guitarists influences and they only mention current players. The greatest players borrowed from the past. I mean Albert King begat Jimi Hendrix, who together begat Stevie Ray Vaughn. And Frank Zappa begat Steve Vai, and so forth.

Though not a shred CD, Bob kicks it into shred mode when needed. But overall the focus seems to be on the music and playing. And not on setting speed records and blowing yourself up bigger than life. A killer rock CD that wasn't made in the studio. It was made between the player and the instrument. In this, Bob makes his music very accessible to listener.

One of the thing I liked about this CD was the diversity between all the songs. The styles and influences are constantly changing. Sometimes within the same song. From "Hands-On" a mainstream rocker to "Beggars Delight" a very heavy rocker to "Desert Flower" a very tasteful jazz piece that you could listen to with your parents in the car. Heck *they* might even turn it up. The CD goes out with a hot Texas style blues song. This track sounding so real, you have to wonder if maybe there's a New Jersey in Texas that I don't know about. Cause this is the real thing! The variety in styles not only shows exactly how well rounded Bob is as a musician. But it makes for an interesting experience for the listener. Never repeating itself...Thus never getting old.

I pointed out in an earlier review that I was a sucker for great "wah" work. Well I must say that Bob almost guaranteed himself a good review by all the wah he used on this disc. And I don't mean he had it on and it was kicked up or down. I mean he worked that baby! The wah when used effectively can be an additional instrument. But that's hard to master. I believe that's why so many players just have them cranked wide open all the time. Playing the guitar and working the wah to it's potential is like playing two instruments at once. Bob not only did his homework. But he's got a degree in it. Dr. Bob Ernst the Wahtician...I like the sound of that.

A well rounded Composer and Guitarist. This CD goes from spacious light Jazz to Heavy Rock to Electrified Blues. Each style done as if it were the focus of the CD. A rock CD that at times borrows from the past while all the time lurching forward, forging new

grounds! Powerful without being overpowering.



THE TRACKS



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The C.D. opens with "Hands-On" - The title track kicks in with a downright nasty strut groove. Not to be left out, this track features some "wicked" lead work with a touch of jazz influence. Bob shows off some serious blues chops. Keeping the song blues based with a rock influence. "Hands-On" is a hot funky blues jam. But with a twist ending. This dirty blues rocker suddenly (i love the unexpected) turns soft and yes, beautiful....I love the guitar work in the soft change. And the contrast of the two feels.....Kind of like the calm after the storm.

Track #2 "Beggar's Delight" - A beautifully powerful song that's Hendrix reminiscent at times. But not the main stream Jimi. Bob's playing and writing here is more visual in the vein of "A mermaid I should turn to be/moon turns the tides" off of Electric Ladyland. A side of Jimi's playing that I've heard very few tap into before. The only other that comes to mind is Eric Johnson. Bob uses dynamics really well in this song. Bringing you from the in your face wah induced wall of sound. To the calming euphoric breaks that give you a false sense of security. These breaks also give more power to the return of the wall. And ultimately into an intense solo that's both dangerous and healing. Very powerful, but very beautiful.....I cranked this one way up!

Track #3 "Desert Flower" - A very calming jazz influenced song, that'll slow your heart rate. This shows an entirely different side of Bob. Showing his immaculate phrasing. Strip it down this much, and you had better have something to say. Oddly enough, with all the bells and whistles removed Bob has even more to say. And I hear every word. I love killer chops that fill this CD. But it was this song that made me sit up and take notice. This one's almost spiritual man!!

Track #4 "Tex-Mess" - It's in the Texas style. (the style everyone thinks Stevie Ray invented). It's hard to play this style now days without sounding like Stevie. But Bob pulls it off. Kickin' it Texas style, but keeping away from the Stevie clichés. Actually sounding closer to the stylings of a non-Texan, blues/rock virtuoso Frank Marino. In that it features clean jazzy breaks and over the top blues/rock leads. But aside from the comparisons, Tex-Mess is entirely Bob Ernst. Bringing his own blend of Texas Blues but with a dose of Jersey. And working that wah oh so wonderfully.....Working it around some of the hottest electric blues licks on the disc. Taking already smoking guitar and dumping gas on it.....

"HANDS-ON"

A powerful Rock w/a hint of jazz. CD focused on melody and fiery rock leads!

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BOB ERNST - "HANDS-ON"

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