

Dirty Deal

Coco Montoya uses blues as a blasting off point for his emotional, soulful music on his new CD *Dirty Deal*, which will be released on Alligator on January 16, 2007. With his icy-hot guitar playing and his passionate, unaffected vocals, he attacks each of the 11 songs with deep feeling and ferocious energy. Little Feat members Paul Barerre, Kenny Gradney, Richie Hayward and Bill Payne guest. Produced by Barrere and engineer Roger Cole, *Dirty Deal* is Coco's rawest, most stripped-down and impassioned recording to date. Coco first met Paul Barerre and Little Feat at a blues festival and according to Barerre, "Coco's playing was inspirational to me - great tone and attitude."

The band invited Montoya to their annual Feat Festival in Jamaica two years in a row. "Our fans took to him like butter on bread", recalls Barerre. "He fit in so well with the band that I knew I had to produce him. I really wanted to get that live feel from him on a recording, and that's just what we did. He rips the guitar solos, and his voice is as strong as three-day-old coffee." Coco maintains an intense touring schedule including major festivals and headlining dates worldwide. "Montoya is at the forefront of the contemporary blues world" according to *Guitar World* and will be touring worldwide in support of his new release.

-- From *Rosebud US*

BILLBOARD

Dirty Deal

COCO MONTOYA

Label: Alligator

Coco Montoya is one of the reasons people mistakenly think blues is easy music to play. His fierce attack is so expert yet sounds so effortless that it makes you believe anyone armed with 12 bars and six strings can pull it off. That's hardly the case, of course, and the Albert Collins drummer-turned-guitarist's sixth album separates the men from the boys with some of Montoya's hottest playing and most authoritative singing.

The Montoya-penned title track mingles Latin flavors with a soul melody, while R&B is mined on "Love Gotcha," "Clean Slate" and "Ain't No Brakeman" and New Orleans visited on the lively "Put the Shoe on the Other Foot." Montoya and company breathe fire into the standard blues arrangements of his "Coin Operated Love," Lowell Fulson's "It's All Your Fault" and Otis Rush's "It Takes Time," while an aching rendition of Johnny Copeland's "It's My Own Tears" shows that he can handle slower tempos, too.—

-- Gary Graff, Billboard

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Few blues guitarists performing today can top the intensity of former John Mayall sideman Coco Montoya's torrid, Albert Collins-inspired attack. Shards of shivering, feedback-enhanced blue notes fly off the Southern California picker's ax and cut deep into the rhythm section's grooves on his sixth album.

Little Feat guitarist Paul Barerre helped produce the disc, which also features Little Feat members Kenny Gradney, Richie Hayward and Bill Payne on some selections and Montoya's crack road band on others. The program vacillates between blues-rock numbers and straight blues, and it is on the latter material, including tunes by Otis Rush, Johnny Copeland and Lowell Fulson and Montoya's own rumba-driven "Coin Operated Love," that his instrument and voice are at their most gripping.

-- Lee Hildebrand, San Francisco Chronicle

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A grizzly-bear guitar tone and diamond-hard riffs are the strongest cards of this former Albert Collins and John Mayall sideman. Montoya turns them in often on these 11 tunes, right from the opening "Last Dirty Deal," which absolutely roars, to the climactic final solo of "There Ain't No Brakeman on This Train," which concludes the album with a flourish of six-string ferocity. Even the ballads, like "How Do You Sleep at Night," scream with edgy intensity. That's partly because producer Paul Barerre of Little Feat succeeded at capturing the essence of Montoya's live sound, but mostly because Montoya's mentor Collins put his fiery brand on his apprentice's style. It still burns, six albums into Montoya's solo career--especially when he's covering Collins's "Put the Shoe on the Other Foot," a funky shuffle full of bellowing sustained notes and stiletto melodies that reply to his singing. That song's declamatory style also serves Montoya's narrow vocal range well. And while his lyrics occasionally stumble into blues clichés--falling tears, dirty deals--his playing is unfailingly eloquent.

--Ted Drozdowski