

*Can't Look Back, by BlueCoupe.com*



On his new album, *Can't Look Back*, Coco Montoya covers familiar territory, only this time he ventures past the usual boundaries. His fifth solo album will likely be considered by many to be the best recording of his career. *Can't Look Back* is a full-bodied work of substance. It not only delivers its share of blistering fretwork, it adds a soulful blend of R&B to the mix.

Right from the opening track, "Wish I Could Be That Strong," you can't miss the powerful feel and emotion from Montoya's vocals and musicianship. The soulful overtones add to the cut's intensity, setting the tone for 13 tracks of blues-rock with a steady groove.

Montoya has backed away from continuous string bending explosions, rather positioning high-impact solos that complement and highlight the song itself. Examples can be heard on the Holland-Dozier-Holland tune, "Something About You," and a couple of Montoya-penned tunes "I Won't Beg" and "Can't See The Streets For My Tears." Fans who enjoy his standard fare won't be disappointed, there's plenty here to satisfy. Montoya unloads on a few numbers like "Running Away From Love," "Trip, Stumble and Fall," and the Collins tune, "Same Old Thing."

When an artist can expand beyond the usual comforts of a familiar format we all benefit from the growth. This new album is a testament to Montoya's continued maturation as an artist and a fine example of his incredible talents. There's no question about setting the fretboard on fire, he's just more selective about when to light the match. Montoya has started incorporating other styles into his music. Quite honestly, it really works. *Can't Look Back* may be bit too intense and overpowering for some, thought it won't be enough for others. Montoya's efforts cover a wide enough area to impress both his loyal fans while creating new ones. It seems producer Jim Gaines has the Midas touch, with another winning CD under his belt.

Bottom line, *Can't Look Back* is Montoya's finest work, and should be worth a nod at award time. With this latest release, Montoya moves even closer to the title of being a legendary electric blues guitarist. | *August 2002*

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