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ALBUM REVIEW

Altered Five Blues Band | **Cryin' Mercy**

BY RICK J BOWEN
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Milwaukee quintet Altered Five bust right out of the gate with explosive hard driving blue collar rockin' blues on their third album *Cryin' Mercy*. The album released in October of 2014 marks the band's debut on Omni Vibe records, who were no doubt instrumental in pairing them with blues guru and Grammy winning producer Tom Hambridge. The result is an eleven song thrill ride of all new tunes of fresh straight ahead muscular blues mixed with vintage soul designed to showcase the mighty vocals of front man Jeff "JT" Taylor.

Recorded at the Dream Factory in Milwaukee the sound jumps out of the speakers on the first track "Demon Woman." There's thundering drums and raging guitar from brothers Scott and Jeff Schroedl, which set the table for the fireworks to come, before settling into an edgy six-eight groove. The bands then slips into an old-school swinging shuffle called "Too Deep," and features classic solos and tradeoffs.

The dynamic R&B ballad finds Taylor taking pages from the Otis Redding playbook and preaching the blues. The funky riff of "Stay Out of My Business" could be described as a slowed-down "Killing Floor," with Taylor's man power baritone channeling a young B.B King. He then softens his tone and spares with keyboardist Raymond Tevich on the Fender Rhoads for the playful intro to "I Got You," until the rhythm section cleverly slides in with a second line groove. The four on the floor rocker "Who's Your Lover" features gritty lead riffs from Jeff Schroedl while Taylor wails the demanding chorus. The saucy slow blues "Move House" must be a show stopper in the band's live set, with the burning "Here's Your Hat What's Your Hurry" and funky "Urgent Care" -- sure to be dance floor fillers.

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