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## J. Geils Band – Speakers Corner

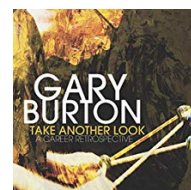
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by Audiophile Audition | Mar 12, 2019 | Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews, SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews | 0 comments

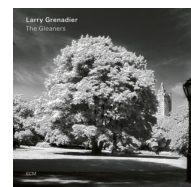
**J. Geils Band – Atlantic Records ATLANTIC SD 8275 (1970)/Speakers Corner (2019) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 33:22 \*\*\*\*1/2:**



(Peter Wolf – vocals; Seth Justman – piano, organ; Magic Dick – harmonica; J. Geils – guitar; Danny Klein – bass; Stephen Bladd



**ECM — Larry Grenadier**



**Steven Isserlis**



– drums, vocals)

Originally an acoustic blues band out of Worcester Mass in the late 60's,

The J Geils Band

became “the” rock band

of Boston. When the

group assembled its

classic lineup (J

Geils/guitar; Peter

Wolf/ vocals;Seth

Justman/piano, organ;

Richard “Magic Dick” Salwitz/harmonica; Danny Klein/bass and Stephen Bladd/drums), they were on their way to stardom.

Their gritty version of rhythm & blues-inspired rock (that included *soul* and *doo wop*) connected with audiences and their rock and roll counterpoints. Their commercial breakthrough occurred on the 1973 album, *Bloodshot* which featured the single “Give It To Me”. In 1975, *Nightmares...And Other Tales From The Vinyl Jungle* produced another hit, “Must Of Got Lost”.

The singles increases commercial exposure, and launched them as the opening act for The Rolling Stones, Peter Frampton and Rod Stewart. J Geils Band’s live performances became legendary, fueled by the antics of Peter Wolf’s “microphone vaulting” and a “lead harp” player (Magic Dick). In an unlikely turn of events, this “everyman’s band” became hugely successful in the 1980’s. Radio and MTV-friendly songs like “Freeze Frame”, “Love Stinks” and “Angel In The Centerfold” cemented their legacy. This popular acceptance led to fame, but as with most bands, they disbanded. While there were occasional reunions, the seminal days of the J Geil Bands were over.

Speakers Corner has released a 180-gram vinyl upgrade of the Atlantic debut of *J Geils Band*. In barely over 33 minutes, the tough-as-nails musical distillation of rhythm and blues is given new life. While the band doesn’t necessarily break new ground, their version of blues rock is effective. Side One opens with a Wolf/Justman composition, “Wait”. It is straight-ahead blues. The vaunted lead harp (Magic Mike) and gritty vocals tell the



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tale. There is a call & response and foot stomp. The original material stands up to the covers on this album. An instrumental “Ice-Breaker” exudes a Memphis-style r & b vibe. Geils has a sizzling guitar solo, and is followed by Magic Dick and Seth Justman on organ. Concise (a mere 2:15), it epitomizes the roots of band. “Cruisin’ For A Love” feels like Chicago blues with a New York City lyrical context. A piercing harp and blues piano lead into Geil’s searing distorted guitar solo. On “Hard Drivin’ Man”, the group adopts an accelerated tempo in a country blues romp. Things get down and nasty on John Lee Hooker’s “Serves You Right To Suffer”. Wolf’s lower-register vocals and phrasing are an obvious shout out to John Lee. Again, Magic Dick contributes a slow-burning solo, and Geils’ run is incendiary. At 5:01 it is the longest cut on the album). It showcases a pedigree, developed from jamming in a lot of bars.

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Side Two continues the tribute to blues legends with a rollicking cover of Otis Rush’ “Homework”. injecting blues dialect into adolescence (“ Can’t do my homework anymore”) is amusing, and Wolf’s raw vocals sell it. Geil’s unleashes another ripping solo. Back to vintage soul, The Contours’ clever hit, “First I Look At The Purse” (co-written by Smokey Robinson) features great vocal harmonies, back beat and the classic harp/guitar sound. Wolf has an affinity for soul music and it is palpable on his singing. “What’s Your Hurry” (another original) emulates 60’s soul with stylish electric guitar hooks and a cowbell. There is a discernible fuller sound. “On Borrowed Time” is almost like a vintage Stax recording with a slowed-down, pulsating arrangement. The band connects with 50’s Rock & Roll spirit on “Pack Fair And Square”. it is explosive with the attitude of original rockers like Bill Haley, or Jerry Lee Lewis. As usual, Magic Dick blows the house away on harp. The finale is a second instrumental, Albert Collins’ “Sno-Cone”. Geils, Magic and Justman (great organ fills) percolate and drummer Bladd gets a well-deserved solo.

J Geils Band was an auspicious debut. Their musical craftsmanship is prominent. The vinyl upgrade is excellent, with a centered mix that showcases the unfiltered power of a

hard-driving Rock “N” Soul band. A unique combination of electric guitar, organ (and piano at times) and harmonica perfectly frame the emotional vocals.

**TrackList:**

*Side One:*

Wait

Ice Breaker (For The Big “M”)

Cruisin’ For A Love

Hard Drivin’ Man

Serves You Right To Suffer

*Side Two:*

Homework

First I Look At The Purse

What’s Your Hurry

On Borrowed Time

Pack Fair And Square

Sno-Cone

-Robbie Gerson

***More information at Speakers Corner Website:***

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3

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