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The Boulevards

Desire

(Cage Free Records)

"My band fits into the blues/jazz realm," says multi-instrumentalist Chris Klein, who also sings lead for the Boulevards. He's being modest. His band more than "fits" into the jazz/blues genre; it helps define it. There are nine tracks on this CD, eight of which are original, and they're all good, solid jazz/blues numbers. Maybe what I like so much about it is that the style of singing and playing reminds me of some of my favorite groups of the late '60s/early '70s—Jethro Tull, Savoy Brown, Canned Heat and Quicksilver Messenger Service—just to name the most obvious ones. Klein is a New Orleans native who moved to Colorado at 20, honed his musical skills, assembled a dynamite band and recently returned to the Crescent City. In the record's promotional materials, he doesn't seem the least bit worried about being called a "Jack of All Trades and an Ace at None," nor does he have any reason to worry. He plays tenor sax, harmonica and flute with equal mastery and dexterity. His throaty, yet controlled vocal style is reminiscent of that of another Chris—Chris Youlden, the lead singer on Savoy Brown's first five solo albums, and his flute work sounds, at times, as good as Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull. With an all-star supporting cast of Dave Solzberg on bass, George deCaro on drums and Dan Freedman and Bob Miron alternating on lead guitar, Klein has produced a great album. If this were an old 33 1/3 RPM LP, I might wear out the grooves on it, playing it so often. These guys have just made a new fan.

—Dean M. Shapiro