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Bluesman Little Toby Walker Gets his Due!

Scott McDonald

I'm writing about my friend and blazingly talented Blues artist Little Toby Walker this month. If you haven't heard Toby play, you've missed out on hearing one of the few New Generation Blues artists who has his finger on the true pulse of traditional blues.

Toby has been working on his art, performing and recording, and studying blues for much longer than the 14 years I've known him, but in the last two years, everything has started to come together in a wonderful way for this great player.

Toby went down to Tennessee for the 2002 International Blues Challenge in Memphis last year. He walked out with the coveted Best solo Artist award, a series of heavy hitting festival appearances, and a new CD project all as part of his prize. This wasn't his first trip to the south; Toby took several long road trips to meet, befriend and play with the real Blues masters who live there. Toby can rattle off the names of these folks, then show you their rolls and tunings. He can also tell you how they like their eggs. On his website www.LittleTobyWalker.com, you can take a tour of the south with Toby and meet all the masters he got to know and love. This is man who is honoring and living the tradition of Blues with every step he takes.

Not wanting to stop with the Memphis award, Toby went on a tour of Europe recently, where he played to standing ovations all over England. This tour hooked him up with Powerhouse

Records, and management in England, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and France. Toby was over at my shop last week with a spark in his eye that I've been waiting years to see. The spark that says I'm doing what I love, getting audiences who love what I do, and making a living at it. This is a man who truly loves and respects his audience, an audience which is not only drawn into the musical world of Blues, but its history as well. Toby tells stories - personal voyages involving train hopping and yard bosses, meeting the masters, and sometimes perhaps a tall tale or two.

New York's WFUV-FM John Platt can't agree more, and is a staunch supporter of Toby's music. To quote John: One of my missions on the "City Folk Sunday Breakfast" is to introduce my listeners to notable new talent. From the first moment I saw Toby perform at an open mike for the Folk Music Society of Huntington perhaps a year and half ago, I knew that he was special, and he became something of a cause. I had him on as a guest, and he elicited a lot of response. I sent copie of his CD to friends in the music business, which led to a couple of bookings off of Long Island and praise from people like Bruce Iglauer, the presidernt of Alligator Records, and Thom Wolke, the manager of Guy Davis. It's tough breaking through on the music scene, but if there's any justice, Toby's extraordinary abilities as a guitarist, songwriter, and storyteller will get noticed by more and more people. He's the real

deal, and he deserves to be heard.

Toby's all set to begin a live CD project on his next tour of England. He is also in the early stages of putting out a series of instructional books on fingerstyle guitar technique. You can also study in person with Toby at Woody Mann's Instrumental Guitar Seminars this year, along with the likes of Roy Bookbinder and Bob Brozman.

In the last two years, he has released two CDs; Cool Hand and the latest back in The Groove. They are wonderful, but you really need to see this man live to know the magic that is Little Toby Walker.

Visit www.LittleTobyWalker.com to see and hear what I m talking about folks& that is, if you like great, authentic blues.