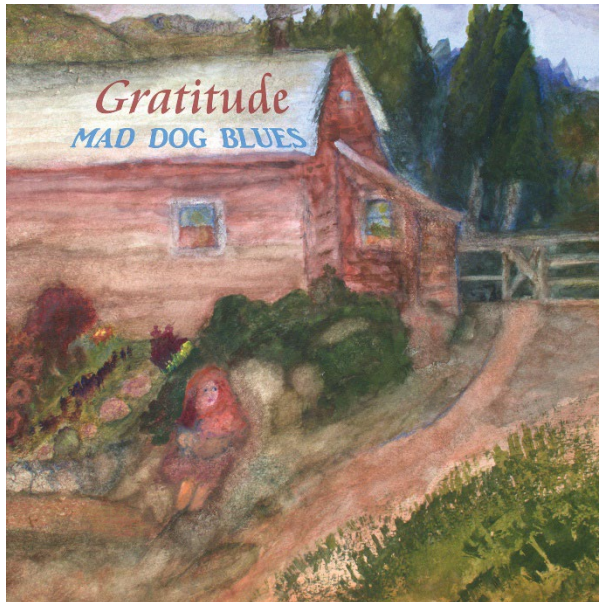


## Featured Blues Review - 6 of 10



### Mad Dog Blues - *Gratitude*

Mighty Fine Productions

<https://maddogfriedman.bandcamp.com/>

12 songs time - 61:17

Denver, Colorado based self-titled Colorado Country Blues Band Mad Dog Blues are something of an updated string band. Creative harmonica, mandolin, acoustic guitars, bass with alternating vocalists offer a respite from electric instruments and drums. The vibe attained is in a very folky vein with elements of blues, bluegrass and jam band tendencies. Mad Dog Friedman is an inventive harmonica ace that possesses a rough gravelly voice. He also plays indigenous flute on a few tracks. Jeff Becker is melodic

mandolin player. The two guitarists Mark Kaczorowski and Sean Bennight are very versatile and melodic. Clark Chanslor is an upfront bassist. Jenn Cleary and Freyja Wild provide vocals on a few songs.

The songs have a joyful intertwining of the various instruments that convey an uplifting spirit. The effect is that of five very accomplished musicians taking turns at solos with none of them except the bass player relegated strictly to a backup role. Jeff Becker's mandolin expertise is particularly on display on "Well Babe", "Down So Long" and "Love Ladder". Mad Dog weaves his harmonica lines throughout the proceedings. The two guitarists are no slouches themselves. Clark Chanslor's meandering bass lines are ever present.

The tempos vary from slow burners to upbeat romps. It is a relief to not have electric instruments (except for bass) and drums on a recording for a change. Thankfully these guys aren't strummers. They present intricate solos on their given instruments. Interestingly the only real dud here is the title song "Gratitude". Half spoken; half sung it is given a flat delivery by Mad Dog. My preference is for the more upbeat tunes such as "Well Babe" and "The Great Unknown". Clark Chanslor's bass has a prominent presence on "Hear Me Crying".

The mandolin and guitars on "Rocking Chair" are quite mesmerizing on this enchanting melodic piece. Funky isn't a word usually attributed to acoustic music, but "Mojo Queen" is and helped along by Mad Dog's funkified harmonica. Guests Jenn Cleary and Freyja Wild take on the vocals on "Peace In Our World". Mark Kaczorowski adds slide guitar and Mad Dog supplies a bit of indigenous flute for flavor. Flute pops up again on the duet by Sean and Freyja, "Pinned Down By The Rain". A kind of folky love song. A hidden track finishes things off. It basically consists of studio chatter, flute and chants of "why" and "peace in our world". Not sure of its' purpose, probably just to look clever.

There you have it, a breath of fresh air. Nothing here you could call blues, but a lot you can call refreshing and totally enjoyable music.