

CD Review

"Compelled to Play"

Stan Hirsch

★★★★½

Stan Hirsch performs at 7 tonight at Third Street Arts Space, 711 Third SW. It's a CD release party.

At heart, Albuquerque's Stan Hirsch is a gem of a blues guitarist and singer. Hirsch brings so much more to the stage than soulful blues. He can strum chords as if it were a flamenco tune. He can work chord structures to make you think he's in the middle of a folk song.

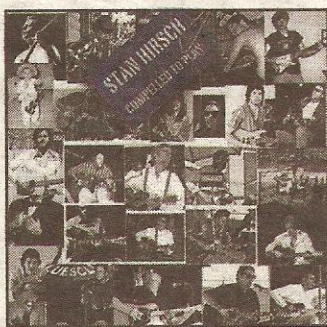
And he doesn't just sing; he breathes life into the music.

There are those kinds of moments in the opening cut "Got My Mojo Working," and you hear those qualities throughout his new album.

"Mojo" is one of five covers. Hirsch composed the other seven songs. His originals are to be cherished. My favorite is the direct statement he makes in "(I) Thank God Every Day (and my woman late at night)" and the good times he injects with his fullness of his voice and his playing in "Guilty of Boogie."

Hirsch says in the liner notes he "recorded 'live.'"

He was indeed in a studio, Albuquerque's Sheperd Studios, but this is what happened there as he explains



Blues guitarist Stan Hirsch releases his new album and performs tonight at Third Street Arts Space.

it: "I sat down, picked up my guitar and started singing and playing. There are no multitrack overdubs, just one man playing all the parts and singing at the same time. There was just one take recorded of each song on the album."

Hirsch doesn't confine himself to performing in his home state. He just returned from an international guitar festival in Zihuatanejo, Mexico, and later this month he's off to a blues gathering in West Virginia. Catch him while you can.