

Southland
BLUES

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JIMMY "O" Bolt From The Blue Smokestack Records

Striking from the blue section of the firmament where ferocious West Side thunderstorms like Buddy Guy and Otis Rush first gathered strength comes this fledgling CD by L.A. sired guitar slinger Jimmy "O." With support from a four-piece unit that consists of James Borden on piano and organ, Guenther Kapelle and Lester McFarland trading off on bass David Libman on drums, and Victor Damus on harp, the leadman takes his red Fender on a single-string sojourn through six originals and four covers flavored by this unit's thumping bar band sensibilities.

Jimmy "O" whose brash and gregarious growling brings Johnny Winter to mind, is at his best when at the gritty edge of his range.

But he's less than successful on crooners like "Low Down And Dirty" where his vocals find little shelter from the glare of the limelight. The bookend cuts Mean Lookin' Woman," a shuffle rhythm pounder which opens the set, and "Cut Me To The Quick," which closes it, find the entire group in top form.

—Richard Hixson
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