

RUBEN HOEKE BAND

Loaded

DIMENSION

Dutchman Ruben Hoeko really has music in his blood. Respected

guitarist, song writer, music journalist, record producer and also leader of this smoking rock/blues band.

Even though well loved and acclaimed on the blues circuit for me on several numbers I hear a distinct 'Van Halen' influence both in the vocal approach of singer Frank Van Pardo and the lightning fast guitar work of Ruben himself. This Halen feel comes over on blistering album opener 'High On The Bottle', the 100 mile an hour rocker 'Raging Fire' with all the attitude and bite of something from Van Halen 1 or 2 and the groove laden 'Give it Up!'.
I

But before you think that is all there is to this album 'Gone But Not Forgotten' is more laid back and heartfelt with superb grizzled vocals and a touch of Hammond organ and as with most albums in the blues field there is that Hendrix influenced moment, and on this release that is loud and proud on the electrifying rocker 'Is There a Heaven, Is There a Hell?'.
I

For me not every number works - 'Mississippi BBQ' is a stomping rocker but lyrically too much of an advert for a particular style of food and 'End of the Line' is a fairly routine rock ballad, but the rest of the album is well up to scratch and I really like the haunting instrumental 'David', with its atmospheric style it could easily have fitted on the 'Bladerunner' movie soundtrack. **AL**