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E-Flat Porch Band jams like generations past

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For the times Record News

Around my neighborhood, front porch music means Master P on a cheap jam box played extra loud and bass-y. And that's cool.

But on the porch at the Royal Theater in Archer City Saturday night, the front porch music of The E-Flat Porch Band tastefully hearkened back to a lost generation of well-played, tasteful and smooth blues, folk and jazz music.

Royal Theater productions in cooperation with The Texas Commission on the Arts brought the live grooving and tight down-home porch jams of the talented guitarist Duane Brown and doghouse bass player Rudy Littrell to an appreciative audience.

Brown finger-picked his acoustic guitar lines and slide parts on his Dobro with three and sometimes four fingers, sitting relaxed, singing with a comfortable style and sometimes playing harp. His part-

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ner Littrell played a solid and punchy standup bass, sitting down, while blowing harp and adding mostly background vocals.

Littrell also played kazoo, a hi hat, a tambourine, and an amplified stomp box (an old soft drink crate) "tuned" jokingly to E-flat. The humorous Littrell added the occasional vocal "attaboy" and "oh yeah." At one point he even gave the audience lessons on how to correctly snap their fingers to the beat.

If the sets were tightly rehearsed, the mood was amazingly relaxed considering the tone of the blues songs the duo played. "Angst free" was the apparent theme of the performance. Certainly the two men enjoyed themselves on stage while playing some amazingly tight tunes.

The duo's playing had a good snap and roll to it.

Throughout the performance, I felt my left foot tapping right along to the funky stomp box. Both Littrell and Brown belted out some solid blues vocals as well as some tasteful harmonica licks. Occasionally, the texture and the multiple instrumentation made it sound like there were three people on stage.

If the McKinney, Texas, duo's gimmick is the multiple live instrumentation, the real reason to see them was their finely played porch blues tunes.

The only bad thing was that there were not more folks there to enjoy The E-Flat Porch Band. Certainly, folks can listen to Master P anytime.

The Royal Theater will next present the Branson style "The Texasville Opry" on July 27, and the musical "Wagon Wheels West" on August 2, 3, 9 and 10. For information or tickets, please call (877) 729-ROYAL or www.royaltheater.org.