

There is nothing more engrossing and inspiring as a listener than the sense that an artist truly loves what they do. It comes across in the energy of the music, the creative spark, and in the case of Tim Carman & the Street 45s, the attention to detail. On their 2020 release *Live at State Park*, you get the sense that this group is taking us through their most treasured memories, honing in on every little aspect, and sharing their sense of euphoria.

The Street 45s' eponymous 2019 album introduced us to what they call "Roll Down Your Windows" Funk- an aesthetic that combines influences from Motown, Delta Blues, Southern Soul, Jazz, and World Music. The genre-straddling original songs and stellar performances earned them a Boston Music Awards nomination for Jazz Act of the Year. Having captured our attention, the Street 45s turn to their roots on *Live at State Park*, which was recorded in a single live performance on March 8<sup>th</sup>. This is where their love and respect for this music really comes into play. In the qualified hands of Boston Soul/Blues/Americana mainstays Tim Carman, Pat Faherty, Matt Murphy, Dave Brophy, and Justin Lopes, these gems from the 60s and 70s are rendered in stunning detail.

The set opens with "Root Down & Get It" by soul jazz legend Jimmy Smith. There is a noticeable update here in the sound of Carman's drums and Faherty's

guitar, but it very satisfyingly serves the continuity of this record. Part of the album's charm is the way songs from across the entire spectrum of funky, soulful music so beautifully mesh to form a signature sound for the group. In this track, I am immediately struck by the restraint shown by organist Justin Lopes. There's no attempt here to half-heartedly chase Jimmy Smith's muscular approach. Lopes instead opts to stay in the pocket and let rhythm do the talking. This establishes a running theme throughout this album of giving each song exactly what it needs.

The Meters' "Cardova" is played faithfully, but with the Street 45s' infectious, huge, warm sound. "Beard Oil" by Pat Faherty and Tim Carman is the only original in the set and is a perfectly appropriate change of pace. Carman's energetic funk drumming stands out and Faherty cuts loose on a burning, unhinged solo. Chuck Berry's "Memphis, Tennessee" is reminiscent of Lonnie Mack's 1963 version. This is where we can come to appreciate what the Street 45s are doing here. They're drawing a line that connects Funk, Rock, Soul, and Americana, with each style executed so faithfully and lovingly that the songs here seem like they were made for one another. One can approach this album from just one of these perspectives and discover whole other worlds of music that feel natural and consistent without realizing it.

“9 ‘Til 5” shows off Faherty’s ability to authentically capture the sound and techniques of The Meters’ Leo Nocentelli as he has other guitarists throughout the album. Groovy funk numbers like this also really give us the chance to appreciate the deep pocket created by Tim Carman and Matt Murphy. That classic transition to a blues shuffle just feels so good. “Soul Sanction” throws it back to Booker T. & the M.G.’s of Stax records with some infectious percussion work by Dave Brophy and solid solos by Lopes and Faherty. We finish out the album with some more eclectic choices- Led Zeppelin’s “The Ocean” and Sam Cooke’s “Bring it On Home to Me”. The last track is just brimming with soul and joy, as any honest tribute should be.

I must mention that a big part of what I love about this album is the clarity and overall warmth of the band’s sound. Faherty and Murphy’s beautiful tones are complimented by the fullness of Carman’s drums and that all contributes to the confidence and maturity you hear in this performance. There is an element of the rawness that comes with live performance- amplified by the fact that, according to Carman, the band had only one rehearsal, “Beard Oil” was composed the week of, and all of the tracks were mixed in just two days- but the experience of these musicians really comes through in the quality of their work. They give

each track exactly what it needs without empty spectacle, with a devotion to groove, and with a profound respect for the artists that paved the way for them.

This live release establishes that the Street 45s are a band with real roots, an appreciation for the history of the music, and the chops to pull it off live. It convinces me of their honesty and pedigree and makes me that much more excited to see what they have in store for us going forward.

Listen to *Live at State Park* today on any streaming platform and please consider supporting these incredible artists by purchasing the album on [Bandcamp](#).

Track Listing:

1. *Root Down and Get It* (Jimmy Smith)
2. *Cardova* (The Meters)
3. *Beard Oil* (Faherty/Carman)
4. *Memphis* (Chuck Berry)
5. *9 'Til 5* (The Meters)
6. *Soul Sanction* (Booker T. & the M.G.'s)
7. *The Ocean* (Led Zeppelin)
8. *Bring it On Home to Me* (Sam Cooke)

## Personnel

- [Tim Carman](#) (drums, leader, composer)
- Dave Brophy (percussion, mixing)
- Pat Faherty (guitar, composer)
- Justin Lopes (organ)
- Matthew Murphy (bass)

## Album Information

- Title: *Live at State Park*
- Year Released: 2020