

American gospel music label, Scott is an average singer. Nevertheless, of all his solo projects, Scott does his finest vocalizing here. He duets with Tyscot artists, introduces songs with pastoral messages, interjects Biblical passages and prayers, exhorts singers, and leads hymns, especially on the reverent *Bishop's Hymn Medley* and *Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone*.

Second in appeal to *No Never Alone* is the opening track, *Storefront Praise Medley*, on which Scott directs members of the Indiana Bible College Praise Team on an exciting simulation of the devotional portion of an old-fashioned Wednesday night prayer meeting. Former organist for the Indiana State Mass Choir Bishop C. Shawn Tyson coaxes solemn warbling out of the B3 on Elvina Hall's 1865 hymn *Jesus Paid It All*. Kelontae Gavin, among Tyscot's most popular soloists, holds back most of the extroverted melisma he's known for on *Pass Me Not*, delivering a more measured effort instead.

Not all selections are from the hymn-book. *Great I Am*, written and sung by Scott with a feature by emerging artist Quinton Elliott, is more of a contemporary Praise &

Worship anthem than a hymn. Still, **Keep Hymns Alive** is the best of Bishop Leonard Scott's more recent solo outings.

—Robert M. Marovich

RICHARD RAY FARRELL & THE LEISURE MEN

Life of Leisure

Nuba Records – CK 6112

Master bluesman Farrell offers up another heaping helping of his straight-ahead blues on his new album. The guitarist and harp player is joined on this effort by Troy Nahumko on guitar, Sergio Báñez on bass, and Pablo Báñez on drums.

The jump blues *Livin' the Life of Leisure* features a propulsive thumping line over which wailing harp solos and crisp lead guitar lines unspool. The rhythmic swing of the song unfolds leisurely, not rushing to its end, but letting the words and music wrap around each other in relaxed fashion. The

album opens with *Don't Judge by the Color*, a blues shuffle that sonically recalls Canned Heat's *Let's Work Together*. The pulsing version of Charles Sheffield's *It's Your Voodoo Working* percolates with a swampy rhythm, while the band's version of Jimmy Nolen's *The Way You Do* features shimmering rhythm guitar and crisp lead guitar notes, delivering a haunting minor-chord vibe that combines rockabilly, surf rock, and swamp rock. Farrell's wailing harp introduces the band's rollicking version of Sonny Boy Williamson II's *Please Forgive*, while Farrell's frenetic slide guitar propels the breathless urgency of *Build Myself a Cabin*. The album closes with the band's take on Lloyd Nolan's *I Don't Know About You*, a soaring chamber blues song riding on shimmering beds of rhythm guitar, Báñez's propulsive bass lines, and Farrell's moaning harp blows.

Life of Leisure is the kind of album that you put on and simply let the music wash over you. Farrell and his band envelop us with their rhythmic beauty, their songwriting, and their dedication to living the blues in their songs.

—Henry L. Carrigan Jr. *LB*

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