

## Hip Pocket's latest spans the genres

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The inherent risk in turning a one-night live performance into a live album is that some songs - perhaps ones you most wanted to record and release - feature flaws too obvious to include in the final product. Tapes are changed in mid-song. Guitars are out of tune. Or the singer simply forgets some of the words.

It can happen to the best of bands, including Hip Pocket, the Bloomington-Normal rhythm and blues powerhouse that recently turned out its third release in a 13-year career.

Lead singer Marc Boon won't say what's missing from "Gotcha Covered", a 12-track boogie-fest of cover songs that spans swing and soul.

On the other hand, it hardly matters.

The band's first album in more than three years is crowded with classics from rock, blues, and swing that illustrate Hip Pocket's unprecedented range. Pulled from a Jan. 7 performance at the Radisson Hotel in Bloomington, the collection deftly answers the musical question: How do you get from "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie" to "Honky Tonk Woman"?

By taking "Route 66", of course.

Interpretations of all three songs prove that more than 13 years and nearly 40 members after Hip Pocket started as a straight-ahead blues band, this eight-piece ensemble of horns, guitars and percussion has outgrown labels.

"I'm hoping that one of these days that nobody's calling us anything or categorizing us any way," Boon said before a recent rehearsal at his basement. "Nobody says, 'What is Little Feat?' Little Feat has their own variety of music. They might have started out somewhere, but they evolved into something completely different. The (Rolling) Stones were a blues band when they started out, but as they evolved and continued to go on, nobody said, 'Well, what do they do?'"

Appropriately, "Got'cha Covered" features songs from the Rolling Stones ("Honky Tonk Woman") and Little Feat ("Let It Roll" and "Spanish Moon/Skin it Back"). Boon thinks the variety of songs showcases the instrumental diversity of band members.

Tom Weidrich (keyboards) is the only other original band member. J.T. Payne (alto saxophone), Jim Kozak (tenor saxophone), John Filkins (trombone, trumpet), John Kerner (lead guitar), Chris Briggs (bass) and Gary Erwin (drums) round out the cast.

"We continue to grow and find our way and have fun doing it," Boon said. "And that's what all the songs are about - particularly doing it live again. Doing a studio record was fun and it was a different experience, but we all perform so much more intensely in front of a live audience."