

GUS McKAY
Roadrunner Blues
Independent

As opposed to country blues, this new CD by West Australian troubadour Gus McKay is blues for the country. The guitar and harmonica playing singer/song-writer evokes vivid imagery of the great Australian outback in songs about life on the road, roaming lonely highways and long dusty tracks. McKay's smoky vocals, slashing metal bodied guitar and wailing harp are backed on most cuts by tastefully effective stripped down accompaniment on bass, drums and occasional Hammond organ that engenders a stark, earthy sound as distinctly Australian as it is of the Mississippi Delta. Unrelenting boogie rhythms are as befitting in 'Hustle', 'The World', 'When The Drought Sets In', 'Two Days To Kununurra', 'Don't Go To Queensland', 'Texas' and 'Dogma' as they are in a John Lee Hooker tune. 'Keep On Drivin', the work song 'Roll' and 'Newsreader Blues', McKay's ode to a certain ABC television anchorwoman, show his funkier side and 'Drifter' rushes along like a road train, counterbalanced by the contemplative ballad 'Ramblin'. Sometimes beautiful, sometimes gritty, McKay's songs are created in the hot desert soil and refined under a wide open sky.

Al Hensley