



Albert Collins – *Frostbite* – Alligator Records ALCD 4719 - 1980

Albert Collins came to his brand of the blues with certifiable pedigree; he was the cousin of Texas blues legend Lightnin' Hopkins, after all. And here, on his 1980 Alligator Records release we find that delicious meld of his use of unique tunings and cutting blocked chording designs that lends his exemplary blues instantly recognizable. Across the landscape of this extraordinary outing is Collins' characteristic slashing, icy, and vicious guitar bravura, one on continually bursting exhibition. Now, some reviewers at the time of this collection's release grumbled that it did not embody the muscle and constancy of his 1978 Alligator Records *Ice Pickin'* debut. I am here to implore upon you that that notion is hogwash. There is no "sophomore slump" witnessed here!

Collin's astonishing striking right-hand guitar assault, with those ferocious sustained single notes in that trademark reverberating and resonating arctic form, is on full display across this outing. His signature frigid sound wholly satisfies.

Backing Collins on this superb collection were some of the best bluesmen in the land including low-end bass master Johnny B. Gayden, drummer supreme Casey Jones, keyboard great Allen Batts, saxophone giant A.C. Reed, Bill McFarland, Jerry Wilson, Henri Ford, and Paul Howard lending their considerable proficiencies on saxophone and horns, and Marvis Jackson with his stellar guitar competencies

Producers Bruce Iglauer and Dick Shurman presided over the recording sessions, ensuring that Collins and his crew were captured at the heights of their individual and collective powers.

Collins' vocals lent the significances of the tunes he sang upon to come through loud-and-clear with their intended meanings, and when he deployed his sly witticisms and mischievous word play to his lyrics, they are a joy to behold. "Soft shoulders and dangerous curves" indeed, Mr. Collins! Here, Collins' second Alligator Records release ideally set the table for his 1981 *Frozen Alive!* collection, one that cemented the excitement Collins and his bards brought to a performance. If you prefer your blues with a wintery, nipping guitar splendor, combined with songs that will both cause reflections and high euphoria, this impressive collection is for you.

This is a highly recommended blues document, and one you should hold in your collection!

From Curt's Blues Blog