

Nat Riddles And Charlie Hilbert: El Cafe Street Live! (zip)

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

For blues harmonica fans, students, and pros alike, this is a must-have: the first available digital compilation of the work of Nat Riddles (1952-1991), all of it recorded live on the streets of New York. 26 tracks (including four El Cafe Street interludes of Nats bantering with passersby), a total of two-and-a-half hours of mp3s, all for only \$10. I will happily refund your money if you are less than delighted by the contents of this collection. This is a labor of love. The .zip file for download includes liner notes in PDF form. Im pasting most of them below, all except for a few additional notes, three photos of Nat, and one of guitarist Charlie Hilbert. NAT RIDDLES AND CHARLIE HILBERT: EL CAFE STREET LIVE! "The blues world, in one respect, is like the world at large: the great talents dont always get the recognition they deserve. All of us are familiar with the local hero who doesnt tour and whose recordings, homegrown or banished to minor labels, dont break through. The Memphis piano queen Di Anne Price is one such artist; the Milwaukee harmonica master Jim Liban is another. Yet the blues world, like blues songs themselves, loves nothing more than sudden reversals, unexpected redemptions, triumph wrenched from disaster, or obscurity. "The late Nat Riddles, who died of leukemia in 1991 at the age of 39, was my teacher and friend. Ive been talking about him since I first met him on a cold winter day in 1985, when I was walking down Amsterdam Avenue in New York blowing harp and he pulled his cab alongside to see who I was. I wrote about him at length in my memoir, Mister Satans Apprentice, which could just as well have been titled Nat Riddless Apprentice. I took a couple of lessons from Nat that spring that transformed my approach. I learned tongue-blocking and a dozen other tricks of the trade. I followed him around that summer as he and his guitar-man, Staten Island native Charlie Hilbert, worked the sidewalks of Greenwich Village as a duo called El Cafe Street. I watched Nat flirt with every kind of woman who walked by. He could snake-charm. He could dazzle with his rap. And he could blow like the crown prince of the blues harmonica: the inheritor of a tradition that he seemed to have mastered, distilled, and transformed into living street theater. "Nats sound haunted me. I thought then, and I still think, that hes a world-class player, every bit the equal of Billy Branch, Sugar Blue, and others of his generation. But until now, Ive had no way of offering evidence on his behalf. His entire recorded output consists of vinyl

obscurities: one solo album on Spivey Records, two LPs as a sideman with Larry Johnson, and a handful of other cuts scattered across three Spivey samplers entitled New York Really Has the Blues. Without a digital legacy, who are you these days? But the truth is, Nats best work was open-air stuff. Thats where he came alive. And thats where this album was recorded. "How did these sessions come about? In June 1989, after an extended self-imposed exile from New York, Nat suddenly decided to drive up from Richmond for the weekend. He brought along his toolkit full of harps and the small brown Turner mike shaped like a Roman legionnaires helmet. I loaned him my Mouse amp, a 5-watt portable that Id been using on the streets of Harlem with my own guitar-man, Sterling Mr. Satan Magee. Nat and I drove down to Chelsea, picked up Charlie, and headed across town to the Astor Place cube, a spot the duo had owned four summers before. I brought along my Sony Walkman Professional. Nat and Charlie plugged in at and played a couple of sets. I stood in front of them and rolled tape, running off during the breaks to grab Heinekens from a deli on St. Marks Place. The following afternoon, Friday, they did the same thing a couple of miles downtown, at the entrance to Battery Park, until a cop finally came by and told them to quit. "That was eighteen years ago. A lot has happened since then. Nat got sick and died just as my own act, Satan and Adam, was breaking out with a first album and beginning to tour nationally. Nats celebrity within New York blues circles, which was considerable, slowly faded as those whod actually seen and heard him moved on or moved away. When Satan and Adam dissolved in 1998, Charlie and I teamed up for occasional gigs. The ghost of Nat Riddles haunted us. We knew how good the guy was; we knew wed been lucky to share time with him. We also knew he was a nobody as far as the rest of the blues world was concerned. Spivey Records? Lenny Kunstadt, Spivey founder and chronicler of the New York blues scene for many decades, had been found dead in his own cluttered apartment in 1996. So much for reissues. So much for Nat. "The bag of tapes from those 1989 sessions has been collecting dust in my various Manhattan and Mississippi closets ever since. One particular cut, Nats version of Big Walters Easy, was something Id woodshedded with for a while, struggling to match Nats relaxed intensity. When I was writing Mister Satans Apprentice and looking to capture Nats voice, Id used several of the tapes as guidance. But I never imagined that the world would reinvent itself, thanks to the internet, filesharing, and various digital technologies, in a way that would enable me to share Nats genius as a street performer with a broader public. So I let the tapes gather dust. "Now the dust has been blown off and Nat Riddles stands before you, doing what he did on the streets of New York. Charlie Hilbert, too. Charlie is just about

the best guitar-man a street blues harmonica player could ask for. Hes tireless, inventive, flashy when thats called for, and keeps a solid groove. A great front man needs somebody to watch his back. Charlie does that beautifully. "What can I say about Nats playing that I havent already said? Eighteen years down the line, Im now twelve years older than Nat was when these recordings were made. I hear him with no less admiration, but I hear him differently. His singing isnt always on pitch (its not his strong suit) but time and again he manages through sheer force of personality to put the songs across, worrying a line until it works for him. He sings to you, without apology. Still, what compels attention here is the range, intensity, and subtlety of Nats harp-blowing, combined, unexpectedly, with a dream of beloved community conveyed through those words El Cafe Street and the freeform patter in which Nat bathes his audience. "Nat is equally comfortable playing in first, second, and third position; blowing chromatic harp; or soaring on the big minor-turned Marine Band he pulls out once or twice here. None of this distinguishes Nat from a hundred other top pros. What do distinguish him are his buttery growl of a vibrato; the depth from which he wrenches his notes out of the instrument without ever straining; the distinctive plaintive edge that accrues to his notes as a result; and the remarkable fluidity of his note placement relative to the beat, another way of saying that he swings like hell. (His training in Tae Kwan Do, Ive always felt, has something to do with this last quality of always remaining in balance without ever remaining static.) "Yet even this combination of qualities cant quite account for the uncanny power of Nats playing. That power traces not just to his thoroughgoing mastery of the tradition, especially the styles of John Lee Williamson and Rice Miller (Sonny Boy 1 and 2), Big Walter Horton, Little Walter Jacobs, and Kim Wilson, but to his distillation of those styles in a way that seems to reinvent the core values of the blues harmonica idiom. Revivalists, and there are many of them, recycle familiar moves. They play it safe. Nat never does. Instead he seizes the heart of the tradition and wrestles it into what he needs it to be in order to do the street-level work he has in mind. He reconfigures the tradition in line with his own personality: playful, lustful, gregarious, gallant, relaxed, and intense. Hes got that New Yawk sqawk. In your face, but never threatening, never gangsta. "Which brings us to the curious second claim Im making about Nats larger social project, the dream of beloved community. What comes through vividly in these recordings is a spirit of generosity. Nat seemed happy enough to claim the money the streets brought him, happy to bask in the applause, but the performance he actually delivered (harmonica, vocals, and sales pitch) always seemed calibrated less to accrue profit than to pull you out of yourself and back into the human family, his

family. El Cafe Street. What kind of name was that for a blues act? Shhhhhooooom! Nat had already danced himself down the road, hand extended, waiting for you to catch up. No cover, no minimum. Just American music, outdoors under the open skies. This was Whitmans vision; Nat reclaimed it and made it live for a while. Charlie and I still miss him. You will too, now." "These recordings were made by Adam Gussow in New York City on June 29 and 30, 1989, using a hand-held Walkman Professional cassette tape recorder. They were converted from analog to digital format in August 2007, using a Teac W-700R double cassette deck and an Olympus WS-300M digital voice recorder." They have been pitch-corrected so that you can play along. Note: as you'll be able to tell from the preview, these tracks are what an audio engineer would call....a little crunchy. A little red-line-y. That's just about right. Nat's sound and soul shine through. But please be prepared for this element. We're talking street, not studio. Personnel: Nat Riddles (vocal and harmonica), Charlie Hilbert (guitar) Index to tracks: 1. My Baby She Left Me 9:27 2. El Cafe Street 1 0:48 3. You Don't Have To Go 8:41 4. Good Morning Little School Girl 7:13 5. My Babe 4:05 6. Round and Round 6:59 7. Easy 11:09 8. I Had My Fun 10:30 9. Houserockin Blues 7:25 10. One Room Country Shack 6:09 11. Pontiac Blues 5:51 12. Pretty Baby 5:34 13. El Cafe Street 2 0:52 14. I Done Got Tired of You 6:11 15. intro Juke 0:36 16. Juke 7:28 17. New York City Blues 8:37 18. Too Late /Mellow Down Easy 12:27 19. Steady Rollin Man 5:55 20. My Little Machine 5:29 21. El Cafe Street 3 0:19 22. Help Me 7:15 23. El Cafe Street 4 2:33 24. Killing Me 6:01 Bonus Track: St.James Infirmary 4:06 NOTE: A FREE download is available, entitled "NatandCharlie harp keys," which tells you what key harps Nat is playing on each track above. NOTE #2: This zip-file download includes a PDF version of the liner notes, above. After you un-archive the zip file, please REMOVE the PDF file before burning these mp3s to CD! Another Modern Blues Harmonica production (modernbluesharmonica.com)

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

Similar manuals:

[Adam Gussow's Harmonica Warmup Exercises \(with Overblows\).mov](#)

[Adam Gussow Interview With David Barrett](#)

[Nat Riddles.Easy](#)

[Adam Gussow And Charlie Hilbert BLUES CLASSICS](#)

[Nat Riddles And Charlie Hilbert: El Cafe Street Live! \(zip\)](#)

[Adam Gussow And Charlie Hilbert.LIVE IN KLINGENTHAL](#)

[Charlie Hilbert: COUNTING A 12 BAR AND MORE](#)

[Charlie Hilbert: A Blues Sampler](#)

[CHARLIE HILBERT: PLAY LIKE ALBERT KING](#)

[Charlie Hilbert: Play Like Muddy Waters](#)

[CHARLIE HILBERT: RARE NAT](#)

[CHARLIE HILBERT: Righteous Blues](#)