

BLUES TRAVELER

On July 1, 1997, A&M Records will release the sixth record from Blues Traveler titled *Straight On Till Morning*. Unlike prior recording efforts, the band was able to spend a considerable amount of time preparing for this record. There was a month of writing and rehearsing in Seattle, there were five more weeks of collaboration in upstate in New York, and then there was a month of pre-production. From the swamp boogie howl of the lead single, "Carolina Blues" to the hauntingly hooky "Canadian Rose," the depth of writing and solid performances ooze from every note on *Straight On Till Morning*. "We've always been conscious that the live vehicle is a totally different mode of expression from capturing a performance in the studio," says guitarist Chan Kinchla. "We've always loved doing both. But the ability to really make things work in a vacuum, like you have to do when recording, is something we worked very hard at."

Since signing to A&M in 1989, the band has toured tirelessly and built a solid following on the road. Without much support from the radio community or the other normally conventional record selling vehicles, Blues Traveler emerged as a word of mouth phenomenon due to the simple fact that fans connected to the band's mood and music. Averaging over 250 shows a year, the quartet would play clubs, street fairs, the upper roadway on the Brooklyn Bridge, benefits, nitrous parties, and basically anywhere there was a working electrical outlet. Often playing for ten people, the band would return to town and find that the audience had grown exponentially to a hundred or even a thousand. In their travels across the United States, the band is one of one the few touring artist who have brought music to each and every state. In 1992, after all of the big summer touring headliners has passed on Blues Traveler as a support act, lead singer John Popper started the H.O.R.D.E. Festival, which has since grown into the #4 grossing US tour of the 1996 summer.

On their fourth studio record, the band was finally commercially acknowledged as A&M broke two Top 10 singles, "Run-around" and "Hook" and sold over six million copies of the 1994 release "four". Never a "critics darling", Blues Traveler were finally added to the playlists of KROQ and MTV because they became too popular to ignore. If one were to try to describe the band in one word, it would be "honest". Often they're too honest, revealing personal secrets which sometimes shock those who are entertained with these revelations. John Popper has often told interviewers that, "The reason the band hasn't been featured more prominently in our recent videos is because of the circumference of my ass."

The bottom line is that on the road and in the studio, Blues Traveler have honestly loved playing together since they all attended high school together in Princeton, NJ. Leaving themselves no choice, the band literally got into the van and went on the road after graduation. On making *Straight On Till Morning* Popper says, "The only pressure we felt in making this record was to continue an honest dialogue with our audience. We wanted to be completely free and completely honest. I think that we pulled it off and I hope that it comes across that way to our fans."